

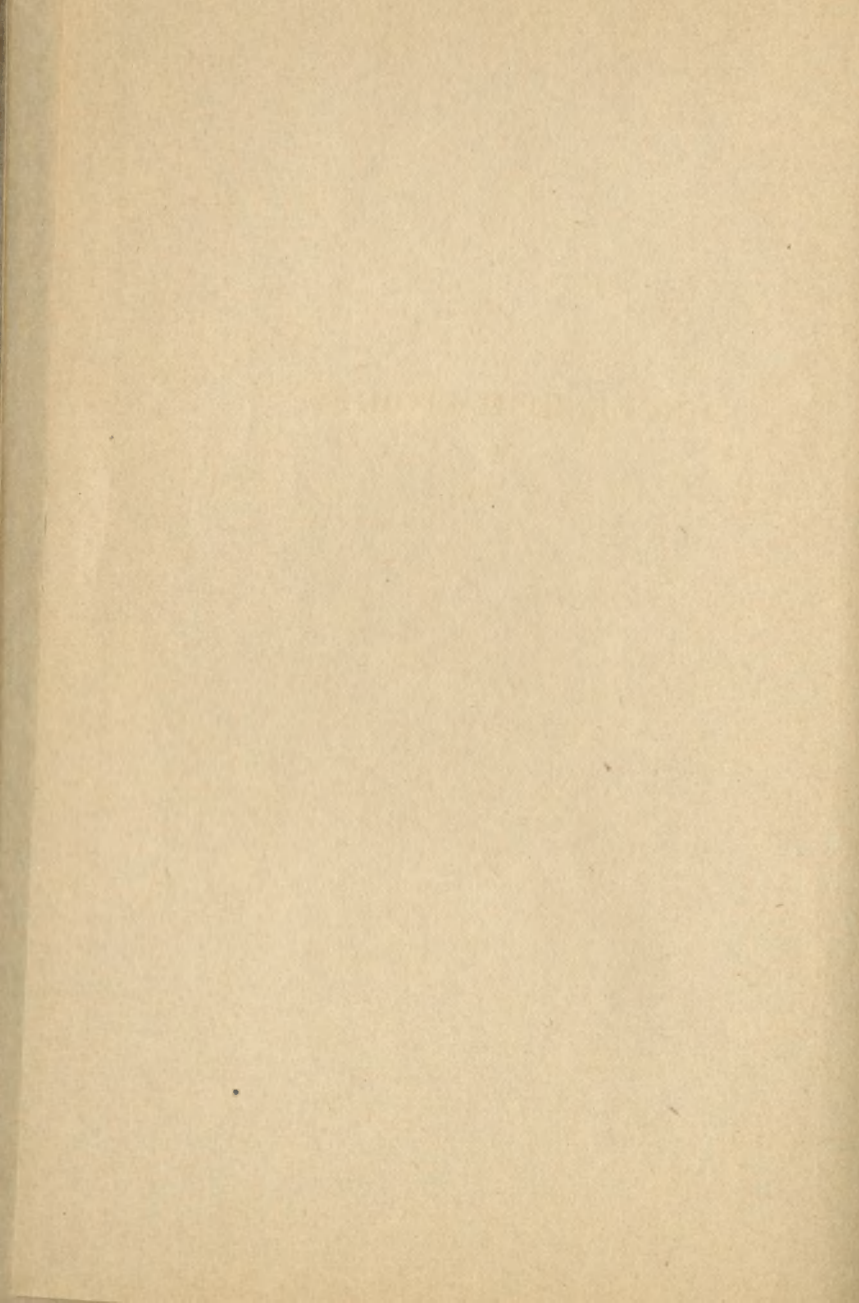
UNCLE JOSH STORIES

BY

CAL STEWART

BOSTON

WALTER H. BAKER COMPANY



UNCLE JOSH STORIES

Uncle Josh Stories

Including
Readings, Humorous Poems, and
Sketches

By

CAL STEWART

(Your Uncle Josh)



BOSTON
WALTER H. BAKER COMPANY

1924

Uncle Josh Stories

Including
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Sketches



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Uncle Josh's Philosophy of Life

“I'd sooner tell Peter on the last day about the laffs I've given folks on earth, than try to explain about givin' them heart akes.”

Uncle John's Philosophy of Life

"By some folks on the last day
about the folks I've given folks on earth,
than try to explain about givin' them
best ideas."

Uncle Josh Stories

THE OPERA AT PUNKIN CENTER

WALL, I've done a good many things in my life and I've hed a lot of jobs wished on me that I didn't hanker fer, but I guess I've got my foot in it clar up to my boot-tops this time. You see Opery Hall at Punkin Center hed bin shet up a long time coz they couldn't git any one that wanted to manage it—it belongs to the village, and they hed tried most everything in it—hed Lyceum Bureau, Indoor Chaw-talk-wa, turned it into a skatin' rink, hed a stock show in it, hed community singin' and high school debatin'. The last debate we hed wuz "Is or is Not Our Country in Danger of the Bolsheviki," and after they hed debated fer two hours on it Jim Lawson sed, "Before we go any further I'd like to know what is Bolsheviki?" No one seemed to know. Ezra Hoskins sed he warn't sure, but he believed it wuz kind of a Roosian stock feed. He'd tried to git sume fer his grucery store, but thar warn't any in the market, and that busted up the debatin'. So as I hed bin down to New York a good many times and seen a good many operys they talked me into bein' manager at the Opery Hall. They sed that what Punkin Center wanted wuz sume regular shows.

Wall, I hed quite a time gittin' it cleaned out. One of the boxes hed coal in it and a cat wuz raisin' a family in the other one—thar warn't many paintin's on

the platform—all we hed wuz a timber curtain, a housekeepin' picter and a curtain what hed advertisements on it. We hed a melodeon and a pianner. The pianner hed four keys gone and the melodeon hed two pipes that wouldn't stop playin' but I calculated a show could use fust one and the t'other and manage to git 'long.

Then I wrote to a paper called *The Opery Hall Reporter*, and told 'em the Punkin Center Opery Hall wuz ready to have opery shows. In about two days a feller cume along, sed he wuz advance agent fer the "Girl and the Tramp," a show what hed a long run in New York. Sed he wuz doin' me a favor in bringin' in his show to Punkin Center, so I engaged him. He used up a whole sack of flour to make paste; I hed to furnish that, then I hed to rent the furniture, git a pistol and a box of cartridges, carry wash water fer 'em, find places fer 'em to sleep and board at and go security fer it, and when they got into town thar wuz more show than I hed engaged. Thar wuz two gals and four tramps. When the show started thar wuz all of fourteen people in the Opery Hall and ten of 'em wuz passes. They may have hed a long run in New York, but they hed a long walk out of Punkin Center. We are goin' to have movin' picters soon as we kin git the flims, but your Uncle Josh won't be the manager.

MOVING PICTURES AT PUNKIN CENTER

'LONG last fall 'bout cherry pickin' time a lot of fellers cum to Punkin Center to make a movin' picter and wanted to git everybody in the village to take part in it. The picter wuz 'bout Damon and Pythias. Jim Lawson wuz so tickled over it, he drunk two quarts of hard cider so he could act nateral.

Wall, we all went over to Deacon Witherspoon's pasture, and they put up a lot of toy houses what they sed would be Syracuse in the picter. And they got a lot of close fer everyone to wear so they would look like Damon and Pythias folks. Gosh, I never seen Punkin Center so undressed in all my life.

Rube Hendricks wuz Damon, and Hank Wilson wuz Pythias, and Joe Winnis wuz King. Gosh, he wuz the fust king I ever seen what chawed tobacker. Jim Lawson wuz a trumpeter and I guess he wuz the fust trumpeter ever seen in Syracuse what hed a wooden leg and hed whiskers.

And they hed all the gals in Punkin Center dressed up to look like Greek maidens, and they wanted Joe Winnis's wife, Orry, to take part. Orry sed she wouldn't run 'round in the woods with a nightgown on fer nobody.

Then, thar wuz Steve Taylor. He wuz a courier ridin' on horseback with a red flag on a pole, and I wuz the commander of the army. So we all got ready to take the picter.

Fust the Greek maidens danced before the King and I never seen any King act like Joe Winnis did.

He forgot he wuz King, jumped off his throne and

went to dancin' with the gals. Gosh, it took me and the whole army to git Joe back on his throne. Then Jim Wilson blowed his trumpet, and Steve Taylor cum ridin' across the pasture with that red flag and Deacon Witherspoon's old bull seen that flag and then things commenced to happen. He chased Steve Taylor into the creek, he knocked down all the buildin's in Syracuse, Jim Lawson crawled into a holler log and all you could see of Jim wuz the peg leg stickin' out.

Joe Winnis climbed a tree, he chased the Greek maidens into a blackberry patch, and then busted the picter machine. I got back to Punkin Center with the army, but they ain't heerd of Damon and Pythias yit.

Gosh, it would have bin a great picter if they'd 'a' got it.

UNCLE JOSH TAKES THE CENSUS

WALL, fer genuine "blown in the bottle" trademark registered foolishness I guess I'm the fust model the Lord ever made, and I hain't bin improved on.

They wuz goin' to take the census in our county and I got the appointment to take Punkin Center Township. Nancy sed if thar wuz any chance of me takin' senses I ought to took some long ago. I told her it warn't that kind of senses. But Nancy sed she didn't keer. Anyone that hed any sense to start with wouldn't go galavantin' 'round the country pryin' into people's business and askin' 'em fool questions. And Nancy wuz right only I didn't know then but I know it now. So I started out. I hed to go to folks' houses and ast 'em the durndest lot of questions; I hed to ast 'em whar they wuz born, and what fer. What their religion wuz, and whether they wuz workin' at it? Whether they wuz married or not, and if married wuz they in thar right mind at the time of the marriage? Wuz they white or colored, what wuz their nationality and why? How many children they hed, did any of 'em have fits? What wuz the League or Nations and did an eclipse of the sun violate the day-saving law?

Thar wuz a Swede family in our township and I went thar fust. Thar warn't any one at hum but Mrs. Peterson, so I told her I hed to cum to git the census. She sed, "Ole he don't bane home and I don't know vere he keeps das har senses. I tank he don't got some du skull look in barn or in vood shed ven did Ole git dam senses?" I got to laffin' so I got the questions all mixed up and I ast her if she wuz a Democrat or a

Methodist, and she sed, "No, I bane Swede." Gosh, I hed to git out of thar.

Then I went over to Mandy Perkins, an old maid what lived over on the Willow Creek road. The minnut I got thar she went to talkin' so fast I couldn't git a word in edgeways. When she run out of breath I told her I wanted to know if she wuz a widder, married or single, and if any children, how many? And that I hed cum to take the census. She sed I hed ought to take something coz she never seen a more peeked run-down lookin' old critter in all her born days. She ast me if I hed rickets or night sweats, and did I have headache—but she supposed not, coz people who warn't right in their heads hardly ever hed headache. It wuz affliction enuff to be simple-minded. She ast me if I suffered from cold feet, and I told her no. That I slept by myself and then I got out of thar.

Thar wuz an Irish family lived about a mile from thar. Their name wuz Maloney. The fust one I saw when I got thar wuz Mrs. Maloney and by that time I wuz so flabbergasted I didn't know what question to ask fust. So I ast her if she hed the census. She sed, "Phwat's a sinsis—is it anything like the flooenzy? I dunno." Then I told her I hed cum to take the census. And she sed, "Wurra, wurra, the saints kap us—the poor man is out of his mind." I told her I hed my right mind but didn't think I would have it much longer. She sed, "Phwat is it your after want-in'?" I told her I hed cum to git the census. She sed, "You need it—phwen did you have it last? Did you look in all your pockets?" I told her I hed to ast some questions, the law required it. She sed, "I hope they miss him from the saylum soon. I wish Finnis wuz to hum." I ast her if she wuz married or single, why? She sed, "You have it awful bad, you

have a punctured tire and the spark plug in your think box is back firin'." I commenced to think it wuz but I ast her if her husband wuz Hebrew or German, and wuz she a Baptist or an A. P. A.? That's all I remember now. I don't know how or when I got home. But they say Mrs. Maloney wuz only two jumps behind me all the way. And she tore up most of the turnpike road and throwed it at me and she didn't miss me neither. Nancy sez she hopes I got some good common sense if I didn't git the census.

UNCLE JOSH BUYS A TALKING MACHINE

WHILE I wuz down in New Yourk I wanted to git Nancy something fer a weddin' present. And I wuz lookin' round fer somethin' that I thought she would like. Every time I go ennywhar I have to bring Nancy somethin' as a peace offerin'. At least that's what the neighbors call it. So while I wuz lookin' I got into a place whar they sold musical things. Wall, when I got out of thar all I hed left wuz fifteen cents and my ticket back to Punkin Center. But I calculated I hed a right good bargain, coz I hed bought Nancy a talkin' machine. Wall, I wish you could hev seen Nancy when I brought it hum. We sot it up in the settin' room. We would have sot it in the parlor only Nancy sed all the neighbors would be comin' in to hear it and she wuz not goin' to have 'em trackin' in mud all over her new carpet.

Gosh, we couldnt hardly wait 'til supper wuz over to set it to playin'. And I don't think either one of us et much. I wuz so anxious to git it to goin' I helped Nancy wash the dishes. I ast Nancy if I hedn't better call in the neighbors. But she sed no jest sot it to playin' an' human nater will do the rest. I put on "Turkey in the Straw" and it hedn't more than got to goin' right good when Jim Lawson cum in and sed he come over to see what I thot 'bout the comin' election. An' then he ast me what other records I hed. Wall, in less than no time atall all Punkin Center wuz at our house. I think Deacon Witherspoon would have danced a jig if I hedn't put on "Sweet Hour of

Prayer." It played some grand opery music that Hank Weaver sed was jest as good as a trip to Europe.

It played "Silver Threads Among the Gold" an' it hed the wimmin folks purty nigh cryin'. It sounded so sad and purty I cum nigh blubberin' right out.

We sot it by the telephone and played jazz music and Hickory Corner got the telephone call to connect them with our house and they hed a dance.

Wall sir, there wuz one record what told about our town of Punkin Center and it told about Jim Lawson and me and Nancy and Deacon Witherspoon, Si Pettingill and Hank Weaver, Rube Hendricks, Lige Willett and about everyone in Punkin Center and fust one would laugh and then t'other. It all depended who the joke wuz on. Cindy Lawson got madder than a wet hen when it told about her. Whoever did the talkin' on that record wuz hard up fer somethin' to do, she sed. Gosh, I never laffed more in my life at one time.

Then it played a band tune and it wuz so nateral you could jest see the soldiers marchin' and you could heer the canon shootin' and the bugles blowin' and then it finished with "The Star-Spangled Banner." Wall, I tried to sing it but I'll be durned if any of us knowed it all the way through.

Jim Lawson got as fer as "The Dawn's Early Light" and he sung that eight times. Deacon Witherspoon sed the talkin' machine could be thanked fer givin' us the world's best music and teachin' us our national anthem. Nancy sezs I got the machine fer her but she ain't hed a chance to play it yit.

THE CHAUTAUQUA AT PUNKIN CENTER

WALL, we've jest hed our fust Chaw-talk-wa at Punkin Center. A feller cum 'long last winter to git subscribers fer it. Jim Lawson sed he hed one at his house most every night. But that feller told Jim it warn't that kind of chaw talk. We all sined our names and last week we hed it. And gosh, I hain't through laffin' yit. The fust speaker's subject wuz, "How the Playthelminthes Aid in Provin' the Theory of Evolution." He sed thar wuz a vast family of Helminthes. Thar wuz the Nemertines, the Spirella Trachonosis, the Castodes, the Annelids Rhabdocoels, the Trematodes Nemathelminthes and others. He talked 'bout them things fer an hour and a half and it wuz only a day before yesterday that we found out he wuz talkin' 'bout worms. Jim Lawson sed it wuz perfectly clar to him all the time and that his garden hed all them things and the fust rainy day he wuz goin' to dig up a lot of 'em Playthelminthes, and go fishin'.

The next day the platform feller sed he hed the pleasure of introducin' the silver-tongued orator from Lick Skillit, formerly of Punkin Center. The Honorable Henry Weaver, who hed a message to deliver.

Hank stood up and sed: "Feller citizens of Punkin Center, most of you have heerd me speak to you before, fer two years I wuz your Justice of the Peace. I am no highfalutin' city feller. I wuz raised right here in Punkin Center. I might say I growed up here between two rows of corn."

Lige Willitt sed, "Gosh they've got a punkin speak-

in' to us." Wall, everybody got to laffin' so it busted up the doin's. But we hed our fifty cents worth.

The next day that platform feller sed, "Ladies and gentlemen, this afternoon we will be entertained by a group of nature's children from Zoo Loo Land. They will fust appear in their native costumes and pastimes." Wall, them Hottentot children hopped right up and out on the platform and I must say as how their clothes didn't bother 'em much. Gosh, they didn't have on clothes enough to dust a fiddle.

Everybody got to gigglin' and Nancy sed, "Joshua, if I didn't know it wuz Chaw-talk-wa doin's I'd go right hum." They cut a lot of Hottentot capers, throwed knives and spears. They skeered the children, the babies got to cryin' and the dogs tried to git at 'em and I didn't know whar it wuz all goin' to end 'til that platform feller cum out and headed 'em off. I guess if he hedn't they'd bin Hottentotten yit.

Then they put on their clothes jest like regular human bein's and gosh how them Hottentot children could sing. That wuz worth a dollar and a half of anybody's money. They hed everybody humin' and singin' with 'em. They sung "Swing Low Sweet Chariot," and "Come Down Moses." Gosh, I never enjoyed anythin' so much in all my life. We kept 'em singin' 'til pretty nigh sun down and then we gave 'em more pie and cake and ice-cream than I thought anybody could eat, and that ended the Chaw-talk-wa at Punkin Center. But we are all lookin' forward to our next one.

UNCLE JOSH AND THE HONEY BEES

WALL, 'long durin' the war when Mr. Hoover hed cut down our sugar to such a little bit that you couldn't git enough to bait an ant, I got to thinkin' it might be a good idea to git some bees and have some honey, so I got to talkin' to Jim Lawson 'bout it. Jim sed he knowed all 'bout bees. He sed one time he drove a swarm of bees from Maine to Californy and back agin and never lost a bee. He sed to do that you hed to git some old bee that wuz halter broke and would stand without hitchin', and put a bell on her and wharever she went the other bees would foller her. He sed he drove 'em to Californy in the winter and back to Maine in the summer so they could make honey all the year around. He sed he hed ten wagons with hives on 'em. He sed he traveled at night while the bees wuz sleepin' and in the mornin' he would camp some place whar thar wuz good bee pasture and the bees would cum in and unload their honey in the hives. He sed he hed forty or fifty bees that knowed thar own names and cum to him to be petted when he called 'em. He sed that bees would work better if you petted 'em. He sed that bees liked music too and most every evenin' before they went to bed, he would play fer 'em on a piece of paper and a comb. He sed they like comb music the best. I ast Jim what becum of his bees and he sed, "I thought I hed a good idea, I crossed 'em with lightnin' bugs so they could work nights and the poor little critters jest worked themselves to death.

"I've bin thinkin' of gittin' some more, only I hain't

got 'round to it yit." Wall, I didn't take much stock in Jim's bee story, so I wrote a letter to a bee place out in Ohio. And they sent me six hives of bees, a book what told all 'bout bees and a queen bee. I wrote 'em fer a king bee but they sed the bees I hed wuz all suffragette bees and wouldn't have any king bee 'round.

I hed 'em about six weeks when a warm day cum along and a lot of 'em took a notion to swarm and it looked as though I wuz goin' to lose most of my bees. I got out some new bungalow hives with all modern improvements and tried to git 'em to go to house-keepin' in 'em but they wouldn't do it. They jest sot up in the top of a tree and wouldn't cum down. I commenced to think that mebbe I hed some I. W. W. bees that hed got the other bees to go on a strike, and still I thought bees hed more sense than that. I went over to git Jim Lawson but Jim sed he bein' a stranger to 'em they wouldn't pay any attention to him, if it hed bin his bees he could have reasoned with 'em.

All Punkin Center turned out to see my bees and try and help me hive 'em. Deacon Witherspoon sed he hed heerd that a band playin' would make 'em settle. So we got out the Punkin Center Silver Cornet Brass Band to serenade 'em, but they didn't know what to play. Lige Willitt sed he thought a selection from Bee'thoven would be appropriate. Jest then a rain storm cum up and them bees commenced to settle and sting as they settled. Gosh, how Punkin Center did move. I've bin readin' in that bee book and it says a bee kin pull two hundred times its own weight. I don't know how much a bee kin pull but gosh—how a bee kin push.

UNCLE JOSH AND THE SOLDIER

WHEN the war wuz over thar wuz a good many soldier boys in Punkin Center that didn't have anything to do. As I needed some help about then I hired one of 'em. I told him I wanted to help our soldier boys all I could. He sed he warn't any soldier boy jest a doughboy what hed bin fired by the baker.

I took him hum and I didn't think any human bein' could cut up as many capers as that soldier boy did. He hed a bugle and he blowed it about ten times a day. He blowed it fer us to go to bed by and he blowed it fer us to git up. He blowed it at meal time only he called it "mess," and he called Nancy's cookin' "chow." He made officers out of all of us 'cept him he called me the "Colonel." Nancy wuz the "Quartermaster," and the hired girl wuz "the Quartermaster's Sargent." And he wuz a "Buck Private." He lined us all up in the back yard and made us go through what he called "Settin' up exercises." Gosh, it wuz a whole week after that before I wuz able to set up at all. I didn't think I ever would do the fool things that soldier boy hed me doin'. He took me out paradin' up and down in front of our house at midnight until daylight, he called it "picket duty." And he wouldn't let me into the house one night coz I hed forgot the pass word and I hed to set out in the yard 'til I could think of the durn thing. He called diggin' pertaters "gettin' the Murphys out of the trenches." He called our cow "Prohibition" coz she went dry. He saluted me and Nancy every time he seen us and we hed to

salute back. Gosh, it wuz funny to see Nancy do it and I got a lame elbow from it.

When he wanted the hosses to go he sed "Carry on" and when he wanted 'em to stop he sed, "Halt," and when he unhitched 'em he sed "As you war." He painted up everything on the place so many different colors it looked like Joseph's coat, he called it "camouflage." He got us all down in the cellar and drilled us in goin' over the top. The hired girl wanted to quit coz he would have to court marshal her feet fer not obeyin' orders. When I got sume extry help he called 'em raw recruits and started drillin' 'em and they all quit. And when Nancy and one of the neighbor wimmen got to talkin' he put on a gas mask, and rung the dinner bell. He called the minister a "sky pilot," and sed he belonged to the "Aviation Corps." He made me git up on top of the barn and wave a couple of little flags at him, gosh I don't know what it wuz all about yit. Wall, I put up with it all 'til he told me I wuz detailed fer kitchen duty and that I would have to make my bed, sweep the room and wash my dishes. Then I paid him off, gave him an honorable discharge and let him go. I think in about one more week he would have pensioned me and put me in the Old Soldiers' Home.

UNCLE JOSH IN THE CAFETERIA

WALL, shoot, I'm so doggoned mad right now, if I bit myself I'd have hydrophobia. I jest missed my train, yep that makes four of 'em I've missed now today. I have got on the wrong train twice and I can't miss any more of 'em until 'long in the mornin' sometime.

Gosh, now I'm here I can't git away. I hed a time gittin' here. I wuz ridin' 'long in one of 'em sleepin' keers. It wuz the fust time I ever rid in one of 'em, and 'long in the night sometime I felt a feller rum-magin' 'round in under my berth, and I looked out jest in time to see him goin' away with one of my boots. Wall, I knowed the way the train wuz runnin' he couldn't git off with 'em very well without breakin' his neck, and long in the mornin' he brought 'em back. Guess they didn't fit him.

I wuz kinda glad he took 'em, he hed 'em all shined up slicker'n a new tin whistle. Wall, I hed quite a time tryin' to sleep in that keer. They hed a little hammock in thar, but I couldn't git into it.

Wall, I finally stretched out on that ironin' board and got a little sleep, and when I got up in the mornin' I never wuz so tangled up in my life. I lost my socks in that little fish net they got 'long side whar you sleep. I knowed how I put 'em thar but durned if I could git 'em out.

Wall, I got here finally and I bin havin' quite a time to git anything to eat since I bin here. When I used to cum to New York I always stopped at the Astor House. I kinda liked Mrs. Astor's cookin'.

But I guess they moved away. Wall, I got into a place called a cafeteria, I believe. They hed a lot of gals in thar and one gal handed me a little thin plate with a knife and fork and napkin on it, and 'nother gal give me a little plate with a little butter on it, you could almost see it. I think she wuz Mrs. Hoover.

Another gal give me two slices of bread and another a bowl of soup, and another one some roast beef and another one some mashed potaters, and then they wouldn't let me eat it 'til I hed paid fer it. I hed to carry it over to a table and set it down and go git a cup of coffee and a spoon and cream and sugar, and a glass of water and pepper and salt. And I got it all together finally and I et it.

When they warn't watchin' me I sneaked out without washin' the dishes.

MOVING DAY AT PUNKIN CENTER

WALL, sir, it wuz the fust of May back hum in Punkin Center. Movin' day. I don't believe thar wuz ever as many people moved away from our town as they did last spring. Yes, sir. Jest as we wuz gittin' to be quite a city too. We hed two new houses and the trolley line run within eight miles of us.

Wall, the whole trouble wuz our town went prohibition last spring. Yep, we're a dry town now. We did have four saloons and one drug store, now we got five drug stores.

Wall, Hiram Wood made up his mind he wuz goin' to move over to Hickory Corners and sent over to git Jim Lawson and me to cum over and help him move. They hed moved the fence that run from his house down to the drug store and he didn't have nothin' to git hum by.

Wall, I knowed Hi since he wuz a little feller and his wife Mandy, too, you see thar wuz two Wood family's in our town. Hi's folks and Mandy's folks and Hi wuz sparkin' Mandy and he ast Mandy if she would marry him, and she sed she would, so Wood married Wood and they warn't married no time at all 'til they hed a house full of kindlin'.

Wall, Hi wuz a sort of no count feller. He didn't know very much. I remember one spring he put so much fertilizer on his punkin patch he didn't have any punkins. He started 'em to growin' and they growed so doggoned fast the vines wore the punkins out draggin' 'em over the ground. He hed to put three more rails on the fence to keep 'em in the field.

Wall, he heerd somebody say "Laff and grów fat," and he sot up two whole days and nights ticklin' the hogs with a straw tryin' to make 'em laff. He sed he could save a lot of corn if he could git 'em hogs to laffin'.

Wall, he only did one good thing. He wuz the leader of our band. He played a Jew's harp, but 'long in the winter he got a cold and the doctor told him to grow whiskers. Wall, sir, he growed whiskers that looked like a lot of hay on fire and then he couldn't play the Jew's harp any more, 'cause it got tangled up in his whiskers and pulled 'em out and that busted up the band.

Wall, Jim and me went over to help him move. We got a lot of things out on the wagon and Hi got in the doggonest fix. He crawled into the hen coop to nail a door on it and he nailed himself in and threwed the hammer out and he couldn't git out. Wall, Jim wuz crawlin' 'round over things in the garret and he run his wooden leg through a bung hole in an empty barrel and fell down-stairs with it and he couldn't help any more. And I wuz cumin' down stairs with a lookin' glass under one arm, a set of quiltin' frames under t'other, feather bed on my shoulder, dishpan full of dishes in my hands and a jar of preserves and them quiltin' frames got between my legs and threwed me down, busted the preserves, ripped open the feather bed and I got preserves and feathers all over me and the hosses got skeered and run away and Hiram started after 'em and I started after Hiram and the dog started after me and the whole town of Punkin Center turned out to see who'd bin tarred and feathered.

Wall, we just got things straightened out when the constable cum 'long and arrested Hi fer tryin' to take

things out of the state what hed a mortgage on 'em and put me in the calaboose fer aidin', and a bettin' of him. Wall, sir, I hed to sell the best yoke of oxen I hed to git me and Hi out and I don't believe I ever will fergit movin' day at Punkin Center.

UNCLE JOSH AND AUNT NANCY ON A VISIT TO NEW YORK

WALL, 'long last summer, shortly after Nancy and me wuz married, I wuz gettin' ready to cum down here to New York, and nothin' would do Nancy but she must cum along. I sez, "Now looka here, Nancy, I know durn well if I take you down t' New York I will have to tie y' up t' a telegraph pole three or four days and git you used to the keers."

Wall, nothin' would do Nancy but she must cum 'long, so we got down here, and we wuz walkin' 'round lookin' at the things, and all at once Nancy sez to me, "Gee whiz, Josh, jest look at them 'ere butter beans. Ain't they big?"

I sez, "Nancy, you silly old goose, them's bernaners." Wall, we walked 'round about a half an hour longer and all at once Nancy grabbed me by the arm, and jumped right up in the air, and blattered out like a dyin' calf. I sez, "What's the matter with you, Nancy, are you goin' to have a conniption fit right here in New York City?" She sed, "Joshua Weathersby, I want to go straight hum'. I never wuz in a town in my life whar they hed such darnation doin's. Why, Joshua, jest looka thar. Thar's a big bird a flyin' and spinin' 'round up thar over our heads. Why don't sume one try and kill it?"

I sez, "Nancy, that's one of them thar air ships." Wall, then we got on a boat and we went down to Coney Island and hed a purty good time, and when we wuz comin' hum' in the evenin', thar wuz a band

on the boat a playin' and the young folks a singin',
"Take 'Em Up in the Air, Boys."

Wall, that boat got to bobbin' up and down and
cuttin' up didoes and I didn't feel very good, but it
didn't bother Nancy any, she kept right on talkin'.
She sez, "Joshua, ain't this the loveliest evenin'?
Joshua, do you think the moon will be up this evenin',
Joshua?"

I sez, "I will be durned if I know, Nancy, but the
way I'm a feelin' right now, if I et that gosh durned
old moon, it will be up."

UNCLE JOSH KEEPS HOUSE

WALL, gosh all hemlock, 'bout a week ago Sary Ann Martin wuz took down with a fever and Nancy hed to go down and take keer of her, she bein' a widdy woman, and I hed to stay hum' and keep house. Wall, Cindy Lawson cum over to go down with Nancy and left her boy with me to take keer on, and Nancy sed to me, "Now Joshua, the bread is sot to rise, the churnin's all ready to do and don't let the soft soap bile over and keep your eye on the smoke house and don't let it kotch fire, and I guess mebbe the speckled hen will hatch to-day and I wouldn't wunder if the bees wouldn't swarm, and Joshua don't you let Cindy's boy fall in the well nor nothin'." Gosh, I hed a few things to do besides takin' keer of Cindy's boy, and that boy could ast more fool questions. He sed to me, "Uncle Josh, whar does the wind come from?" Wall, I told him some of it cum from Ohio and most of it cum from Nebrasky. He sed, "Wall, Uncle Josh, what's Nebrasky?" I told him it wuz a state and he sed, "Wall, Uncle Josh, what's a state?"

Wall, I took off my coat and vest and pinned one of Nancy's aprons on me and I hedn't took more than a dozen steps when I tripped and fell down over that durned apron and hit my head on the stove, made my nose bleed and knocked down the stove pipe and the soot went all over the bread and jest as I wuz gittin' things straightened out that boy sed to me, "Uncle Josh, does the Lord know everything?" I told him I calculated as how he did. He sed, "Wall, then the Lord knows I'm hungry, don't he?" Wall, I give him some bread and butter and put apple sass on it and I

started in to do the churnin'. Wall, I churned quite a spell and I looked in the churn to see if the butter wuz cumin' and my spectacles fell off and the churn dasher broke 'em, while I wuz tryin' to fish 'em out my plug of tobacker fell in the churn and spiled the cream. Wall, I wouldn't a keered, but I didn't have any more tobacker.

Jest then I heerd that boy say, "Uncle Josh, is thar a bug in it?" and I looked 'round and durned if he didn't have my watch open and wuz a pokin' in it with a hair pin. Wall, I took it away from him. He started to squallin' so you could hear him fer a mile and a half. Wall, I give him sum maple sugar to keep him quiet and jest then the soft soap biled over and while I wuz tryin' to sot it off the stove, it up sot and run all over the kitchen floor and sume of it run through a hole in my boot and I hed to go out and stick my foot in the rain water barrel. Wall, I heerd that boy yell when I got in the house, durned if he didn't have his finger caught in the mouse trap and I got it out and tied it up in a rag and he sed, "Uncle Josh, it's leakin', ain't it?" Wall, I heerd a noise out in the hen house and went out thar and the speckled hen hed a lot of little chickens and the cat wuz tryin' to git 'em. Wall, I started to chase that cat and the close line caught me under the chin. I turned 'bout four sumer sets and sot down in the middle of a flower patch and I heerd that boy say, "Uncle Josh, a bee bit me." I looked 'round and durned if them bees hedn't swarmed. And while I wuz tryin' to hive them they got all over me and while I wuz fightin' 'em off that boy fell into the wash-tub and the smoke house caught fire and the fire department turned out, and when I cum to, Cindy sed, I hed bin abusin' her boy, and Nancy sed a woman can't leave hum' a minit men are such helpless critters.

UNCLE JOSH JOINS THE GRANGERS

WALL, sir, I've gone did and done it now. Yes, sir, jined the secret society. I've jined the Grangers. But I guess I am unjined now. Nancy sed I couldn't keep a secret if I hed it nailed on to a board locked up in a safe and the key lost. Jim Lawson talked me into doin' it. He sed if I jined the Grangers I wouldn't have to pay any income tax. I'd git a better price fer my crops. And I'd git elected fer office of some kind. So I put in my application and they 'lected me and one night last week I went to the Granger Hall to be initiated. Wall, sir, it wuz just enuff and some left over, what they done to me. They took off my coat and vest and boots and sox, put a head of cabbage in one hand and a tomatoe in t'other and then made me march over a lot of thistles and shelled corn. They called it the Grangers' pathway. Then they all got 'round me and sung a song that went somethin' like this:

Who is the main stay of this land?

The man down on the farm.

Who gets buncoed on every hand?

The man down on the farm.

Who works early until late?

The man down on the farm.

And gets a gold brick sent by freight?

The man down on the farm.

The man down on the farm,
The man down on the farm.
It's an awful sin what they do to him,
The man down on the farm.

Then they made me take an oath that I would never cut any ice in the summer time or make hay in the winter. Then they put an onion in my mouth and told me if I wanted to be a Granger to bite it. Wall, I bit it and it wuz full of red pepper and when I hollered fer water they turned the hose on me. Then they painted my face black and my ears red, tied a hoss blanket 'round me and sent me hum. When I got hum our dog didn't know me and he chased me up a tree and Nancy put her head out of the winder and hollered, "Fire, murder, thieves!" And Rube Perkins, our town marshal cum 'long and arrested me and put me in the calaboose and kept me in thar three days before they found out who I wuz and let me out. And now them durned Grangers have preferred charges agin me fer conduct unbecumin' a Granger.

UNCLE JOSH HAS HIS PHOTO TAKEN

WALL, sir, I went and hed my picter took. Yes, sir. Nancy wanted it done. She sed that Ezra Hoskins hed his tooken and Jim Lawson hed his took and Deacon Witherspoon hed his'n, and she wanted my picter to hang up with the picters of her fust three husbands, and I told her I wanted to go to Heaven without my picter hung up in no rogues' gallery.

Wall, she went to cryin' 'bout it and in order to keep peace in the family I told her I would have it done. So while I wuz down in New York I thought it would be a good time to have it took. I hed my hair cut and my store close on and I looked purty scrumscious fer an old feller.

Wall, sir, I went up to one of them picter galleries and a gal took me in to a settin'-room. It wuz jest full of picters. She sed the picter man would be ready in a minit and while I wuz waitin' I could look at the photographs. Wall, thar wuz a lot of 'em—some of 'em hed weddin' close on and sune hed uniforms and some didn't have much of anything on. I guess them wuz actin' gals.

She showed me one picter,—she sed that wuz Miss Randerbilt Rockageller in her cumin' out gown.

Gosh, it wuz real handy, all she'd have to do wuz sneeze and she'd be out all right.

Wall, the picture feller cum out and wanted to know how I would have my picter took—whether it would be in proof or full length or on a buss and I told him I didn't go on a buss very often but when I did it wuz full length.

Wall, he took me in to another room and sot me down in a chair and stuck a pitchfork in the back of my head and another in the small of my back and twisted my head 'round so my collar wuz cuttin' my throat, and he put my right foot over on my left foot whar I hed a sore corn and told me to look pleasant.

Then he wheeled up that picter macheen. I guess he wuz a little ashamed of what he wuz doin', coz he hed his head under a rag, while he wuz doin' it. And jest as he wuz ready to pull the trigger a fly got on my nose and I sneezed and he sed it would be all right and he would send me my picters by mail. Wall, I paid him fer 'em and when they cum I wuz a sight.

One ear wuz on top of my head and one wuz hangin' on my chin, and that fly looked like a mud turtle crawlin' all over my face. That man hed me on a buss sure enuff.

Now Nancy gits the album out and sez, "This is Ezra Hoskins, and this is Ezra Hoskins' wife, and this is Jim Lawson and this is Deacon Witherspoon and that is the picter Joshua hed taken while he wuz out in New York. It's plain to be seen he wuz drinkin'.

AUTOMOBILE

WALL, I've gone and done it. Yes, sir. Nancy nagged at me until I bought an automobile. Nancy sed the Willitts hed one, the Weavers hed one and here we wuz ridin' 'round in a buckboard buggy with a bone spavined hoss that hed spring halt and wuz blind on the off-side. Wall, I didn't hanker fer that gasoline wagon, but in order to keep peace in the family I sold four head of cattle, my oats and corn, twenty hogs, ten ton of hay and put a mortgage on the farm and bought an automobile. I picked it out of a mail order catalogue and hed the National Bank of Pumpkin Center send 'em the money.

Wall, in 'bout a week it cum by freight and we got it unloaded and Jim Lawson hauled it up to our front yard, and I think all Punkin Center turned out to see it and Nancy hedn't bin so tickled over anything since her crazy quilt took a prize at the county fair as she wuz over that joy wagon. Wall, I felt it in my bones I'd make a fool of myself or soon would. So next day I filled it full of gasoline and got all ready to take Nancy, Jim Lawson and Ezra Hoskins out fer a ride. I got out my book of rules and the more I read it the less I knowed 'bout the innards of that machine. Jim sed I hed to turn the crank to shoot off. I turned the crank until my eyes stuck out, but it wouldn't budge. Nancy sed the bobbin' wuz wound too tight or else the shuttle wuz threaded wrong. Ezra Hoskins sed he thought mebbe I didn't have the right kind of gasoline and wanted to sell me a barrel he hed at the store. By that time all Punkin Center wuz thar and givin' advice. Lige Willitt sed I ought to talk kindly to it

and offer it sune hay. Hank Weaver sed I ought to lead it 'round fer a spell until it got to know me. And Si Pettingill sed mebbe I hedn't watered it yit, and Deacon Witherspoon wanted to offer prayer. Wall, I grabbed hold that crank agin and back it flew and hit me on the shins and I sot down in the yard to think it over and Nancy sed the language I used wuz jest shameful. Jest then Jim Lawson sed don't this plug go in sune whars. We found whar it went and I turned the crank agin and that machine begin to rear and snort and started off like a skyrocket and thar wuz a lot of things happened in less time than it takes to tell it. That machine started off across lots and everything with it. Ran over Hank Weaver's dog, tore a hole through Willitt's picket fence, knocked over Si Pettingill's bee hive and kept right on a-goin'. Wall, I worked every lever that machine hed and every one made it go faster. Nancy wuz screemin', Ezra Hoskins wuz prayin' and it wouldn't be right to tell what Jim Lawson wuz doin', but Nancy sed it sounded like he wuz talkin' to the Lord. Jest then we went through Ab Whittaker's wheat field and sot it on fire—and I managed to steer it on to the turnpike road, but that didn't help matters any, coz it only hit the road once in a while. It tore down a toll gate, ripped off one side of the covered red bridge—then started off through Jabe Fisher's pasture and killed four sheep and a calf and then run into a hay stack. That's 'bout all I remember now. All I have got to show fer that joy ride is a broken leg, sune rubber tires, six law suites and a mortgage on the farm. Nancy sed if we ever own another one we will have a regular chiffonier to run it. I ain't sayin' much, but I have got a lingerin' suspicion that all my joy ridin' will be done in the old buckboard wagon.

FOURTH OF JULY AT PUNKIN CENTER

WALL, thank the Lord, I'm on terra cotta once agin, but gosh, I've got one arm in a sling, one foot in a tub of arnica and a sort of you-ought-to-know-better feelin' in my conscience and Nancy's jest told me I'm a bigger fool than Thompson's colt, and he swum a river to git a drink.—Wall, we've hed our Fourth of July celebration and it wuz a great affair. We hed the Punkin Center Silver Cornet Brass Band and Hi Atkins wuz marshal of the parade, ridin' on Lige Willitt's spotted hoss what he got when the cirkus busted here. We hed all the best lookin' gals in Punkin Center dressed up to represent the different states and talk 'bout real estate sharks, gosh, thar wuz fellers thar jest wishin' fer a hul state all to themselves—and we hed the Grand Army Post consistin' of Jim Lawson, Abe Sprossby and Ezra Hoskins. Jim hed a sword, Abe hed a musket and Ezra wuz carryin' the banner, and then cum the Punkin Center Glee Club and so we marched down to the Grove. Gosh, the parade wuz fully twenty corn shocks long. Wall, we got down to the Grove and the Grand Army Post stood at parade rest, Abe Sprossby settin' on a stump, Ezra Hoskins leanin' agin a tree and Jim Lawson tryin' to git his wooden leg twixt the runnin' gears and hub of a wagon so he could set on it. Wall, after the Glee Club hed sung "The Old Union Wagon," Deacon Witherspoon stood up to read the Declaration of Independence. Wall, the Deacon sed he hed lost the book what hed it in, but he could remember it so he sed:

“ Feller citizens, when in the course of human events it becums necessary fer one people to sever bonds which so long have held them in hock signo vinces or in the words of Napoleon at the battle of Bunker Hill, hig gas non compes mentus tempest fugit—then cums an immortal George Washington and as Julius Ceaser at the Siege of Vicksburg——” Jest then the grandstand fell down and the states got all mixed up. Jim Lawson sed it wuz plain to be seen that the North and South wuz united, coz Rhode Island wuz settin’ in the lap of Georgia.—Jest then everybody seemed to have an uncommon thirst fer well water and some of ’em hed drunk as much as ten cupsfull when we found that Jim Lawson hed hung a jug of whiskey in the well and it hed got busted. Jest then the greasy pig got loose and upsot all the tables and Sam Hoskin fell in a tub of lemonade and the durn critter kept runnin’ til it fell into the well and pulled Si Pettingill in after it.—Wall, we got Si out and then Hank Weaver, Abe Sprossby and me went to fire the national salute. We didn’t have any canon so we used a couple of anvils. Wall, we didn’t have any powder so we got some dynamite what wuz over in the stone quarry. So we loaded up the anvils and tried to touch ’em off when Hank remembered you have to explode dynamite by discussion so we stood off and throwed stones at it. Wall, that’s ’bout all I kin remember now. Hank Weaver will be buried Sunday if we kin keep him til then, but the weather’s purty hot. They ain’t found the anvils or Abe Sprossby yit and Nancy sez thank the Lord next year we are going to have a safe and sanitary Fourth of July.

UNCLE JOSH AND THE LABOR UNION

WALL, sir, 'long last winter a feller cum to Punkin Center and he sed he wuz a walkin' delegate fer the Labor Union. He sed everything wuz union now in order to be successful and he wanted the United States as an example. Wall, we held a meetin' down at the schoolhouse and we hed a lot of speeches on the subject. Wall, Jim Lawson wuz chairman and he sed that he used to be a union man. He worked fer the Union and Pacific.

Wall, sir, we organized a lot of unions and everybody jined 'cept me. I thought I would wait a spell and see how it wuz goin' to turn out. Mother sed I jined every fool thing that cum 'long. Wall, we have more labor unions now than you can shake a stick at. Wall, when it cum spring time I hed to hire a lot of help to work on the farm. I hed more trouble than a Democrat at a Republican rally.

I hired one feller and started him to plow and he plowed a furrow across the field and stopped, and I ast him why didn't he turn 'round and plow back and he sed that warn't his job turnin' a hoss 'round, that wuz the job of a Hoss Turnin' Union. So I hed to hire another feller to turn the hoss 'round. Wall, when it cum dinner time none of 'em would cum to dinner. I went out and ast 'em why they didn't unhitch the hosses and cum in to dinner and they sed it warn't thar job to unhitch the hosses, that wuz the job of the Hoss Unhitchin' Union.

Wall, the hosses got to the barn and none of the men would feed 'em. They sed that that wuz the

job of the Feeders' Union. So I cum to the conclusion if I wuz goin' to git anything done I would have to do it myself so I went out to take in some hay what the Haymakers' Union hed made after they hed worked what they called eight hours. And the walkin' delegate cum out and told me I couldn't take in that hay—I warn't a member of that union.

Wall, I ast him how long it would take to becum a member of that union?

And he sed two weeks. Wall, I told him I would like to git my hay in fer it looked like as if it might rain and I wuz afeerd it would git spiled. Wall, after the fust fork full every durned one of 'em went on a strike—called me a scab and wouldn't let me work on my own farm.

Wall, I got a rifle and a double barrel shotgun and two bull-dogs and they don't none of 'em belong to the union and if that walkin' delegate cums 'round this place agin he will be a runnin' delegate.

SHOW TROUPE AT PUNKIN CENTER

(*Rap at door, JOSH opens door.*)

JOSH. Wall, now if it ain't Lige Willitt. Why, how are ye, Lige?

LIGE. Well as usual. Hain't seen much of you since you wuz 'lected sherrif. Whar you bin keepin' yourself?

JOSH. Cum on in, Lige, and set down. This bein' sherrif's got me in a peck of trouble. Didn't you hear 'bout it?

LIGE. Not a word.

JOSH. Wall, you see, thar wuz a show troupe cum to Punkin Center. (*Lights pipe.*)

LIGE. I want to know.

JOSH. Yep, some of it's here yit. Thar's a big fiddle out thar in the hen house. No one can play it. Ezra Hoskins tuned it up, but he couldn't hold it under his chin. (*Both laugh.*) Wall, they didn't no one go to the show 'cause thar wuz a revival meetin' goin' on at the Baptist church. So they didn't have money enuff to pay their tavern bill. Wall, as they calculated to do well over to Hoskins Falls, me bein' sherrif, I went 'long to collect the bill.

LIGE. Did you git it, Josh?

JOSH. Git it. (*Tips chair back and laughs.*) Wait til I tell you. Thar wuz Dave Martin, landlord at Andover; Steve Taylor, landlord at Spring Valley; Hank Williams, landlord at Sugar Creek. They wuz all 'long tryin' to collect. We got over to Hoskins

Falls and four of the actors quit. So Dave Martin, Steve Taylor, Hank Williams and me hed to be actors, or they couldn't show, and they got bills "To-night at Opery Hall—Sherrif and Landlords' Quartette, also the play Uncle Tom's cabin." Steve Taylor wuz a feller called "Marks," Dave Martin wuz "Phyneas," Hank Williams wuz "Simon Legree, a Villian," and I hed to black my face and be Uncle Tom, and the Opery House wuz chuck full of folks to see us make durn fools out of ourselves. I ain't got the welts off me yit whar Hank Williams licked me with that whip. Soon as I got my hands untied I took a fall out of Hank right thar on the platform. (*Both laugh.*) Then I hed to sing a song though I didn't feel much like singing. Here's the song, Lige; you play it and I'll sing it fer ye.

If there's chicken up in heaven I'll be thare,
'Cause every darkey there will have his share.
When old Gabriel blows his dinner horn
Early on that judgment morn
If there's chicken up in heaven
I'll be there.

Then the mule what Steve Taylor wuz ridin' throwed him off and kicked him into the Ohio River and Eliza couldn't git across 'cause Steve hed blocked up the river and Dave Martin fell off a painted mountain and knocked down all the rest of the mountains and one of the blood hounds got Hank Williams by the leg.

And in the last part, whar Little Eva goes to heaven, I got tangled up in the rope and went with her and that ended the show. We all went out to collect our money and we found out Hoskins Falls wuz on the

state line and the Opery Hall wuz in another state so we couldn't git a cent. But I got that big fiddle.

Anything you want to see me about, Lige?

LIGE. Wall, I thought thar wuz a show in our town and they left owin' me and I thought ——

JOSH. You'll have to think agin, Lige. No more show troupe fer your uncle. Why, they are callin' me Uncle Tom now.

UNCLE JOSH AND THE SAILOR

WALL, sir, 'long last spring down hum at Punkin Center, farm help wuz gittin' a little nigh scarce and I didn't know how I wuz goin' to git my ploughin' or hayin' done if I didn't git somebody to help me out. Wall, while I wuz thinkin' what to do 'bout the matter 'long come a feller, sed he wanted a job and I ast him if he knew how to work on a farm. He sed, "Yep, he wuz raised on a farm whar the land wuz so poor that they hed to fertilize it to make bricks and they planted beans with a shotgun, and he got one leg shorter than t'other from ploughin' on side of hills.

He sed he'd bin a sailor all his life. Wall, I didn't put much stock in him, but I hired him. Sot him to ploughin' down in the south forty with a yoke of oxen and in 'bout half an hour I heered some of the awfullest cussin' I ever heerd in all my born days. Wall, I went down to the field to see what wuz the matter and thar wuz that durn fool sailor standin' long side of them oxen yellin' at 'em—"Starboard, gol durn, starboard."

Wall, I showed him how to turn 'em 'round and say, "Gee" and "Haw" and every little while I could heer that feller holler, "Haw, port, gee, starboard."

Wall, when dinner time come I rung the dinner bell. He stayed out thar ploughin' and I went out and ast him why he didn't cum to dinner and he sed he always cums to grub at eight-bells, and I hed to go and borrow seven other bells and ring all eight of 'em to git the durn fool to come to dinner.

When he cum in I ast him what he'd done with the oxen, and he sed he'd anchored 'em outside 'til he could git a tug and tow 'em into the harbor.

Wall, sir, that feller couldn't git over bein' a sailor. He called me the "captain," mother the "mate" and the rest of the family wuz the "crew." He called the front yard the "quarter deck" and the back yard the "poop deck." He called the cellar the "hold." He called the front room the "forecastle," and when mother scrubbed out the kitchen he sed she wuz swabbing out the "cook's galley."

Wall, when he cum in with a hat full of eggs, I ast him whar he got 'em, he sed he found 'em in the "hatch way" and he wanted to put a rudder and a compass on the wind mill, and when I sent him up in the hay loft to pitch down some hay, he stopped and blowed a whistle, sed he wuz piping all hands aloft.

Wall, when I sent him to fasten down the cover on the hay stack he sed he wuz furling the main sail on the hay bark. Wall, sir, he talked so durn much sailor he made me seasick, and he could tell the awfulest whoppers. Some of 'em would make old Ananias ashamed of himself. He sed his father wuz a sailor, wuz shipwrecked at sea and whar it happened wuz a lot of islands whar nothin' but mermaids lived and when they seen his father they all shook dice to see which one of 'em would marry him, and the queen of all the mermaids married his father. They hed three children, two of 'em wuz fish and t'other wuz him.

He sed his father died thar and he got away. Wall, I put up with it all 'til he wanted me to set up at nights and throw water against the side of the house so he could go to sleep and right then and thar b'gosh, I discharged that sailor.

UNCLE JOSH IN THE BARBER SHOP

WALL, we ain't got any barbers in Punkin Center, so I always shaved myself until Nancy got to usin' my razor to cut her corns with and then I quit shavin' and raised whiskers, but Nancy cut my hair with the sheep shears and after she got through with it—gosh, I wuz a sight. I looked like an escaped convict or a fur coat that hed moulted.

Nancy cut in on all styles at onct—gosh—she'd cut it pompadour on one side, shingle it on t'other and cut it curly behind, and she'd git hair down my back, cut me with the shears and then fuss at me becoz I wouldn't hold still—wall, to save myself torture I took to wearin' my hair long—guess I'd bin doin' it yit, but fer one thing—thar wuz a show cum to Punkin Center and I guess purty nigh the whole village went to see it.

Wall, thar wuz a magic feller thar and he ast fer sum one to cum up on the platform and help him and like a durned fool I done it.

Oh yes, I helped him a right smart. That feller turned me 'round facin' all the folks, and Nancy sed it wuz jest sinful what he done to me. He took a pack of cards and two bottles of whiskey out of my pockets, an old hen and a dozen eggs out of my hair, a rat trap, two rabbits and a pigeon out of my whiskers. Gosh—I never felt so foolish in all my born days.

And Nancy sed my face wuz so red she wuz afeerd my whiskers would take fire. Wall, I wuz the laffin' stock fer the whole village, so I jest calculated the fust good chance I got I wuz goin' to git my hair cut by a

real barber, but I'd let a bird dog look over it fust—might be sum more chickens in it—so while I wuz in New York I thought it'd be a good time to have it done. Wall, I looked all over New York fer a barber shop. Guess I'd bin lookin' fer it yit if a feller hedn't told me that "Tonsorial Emporium" meant barber shop. Gosh—they do have the strangest names fer things. Wall, I went into one of them emporiums and told a feller what I wanted, and a whole crowd of 'em went to work on me—one feller went to blackin' my boots; another went to cleanin' my close and a gal went to whittlin' my finger nails, and the barber went to talkin'. Gosh, how that feller could talk. He told me six funny stories: Told me what hoss would win the race; how the ball game would cum out; what Congress wuz goin' to do and who wuz goin' to be the next President: then ast me if I wanted him to go over the chin agin'?

I told him I heered him the fust time. He cut at my hair until he got tired and then he singed me like a chicken. He ast me four times to have some rum and when he couldn't git me to drink it he put it on my hair. He shaved my whiskers in the middle, dyed 'em black, tied my head up in hot rags and then turned the buzz fan on me.

Wall, when I got out of thar I never wuz so duded up in all my life and when I got hum it wuz a full minit before Nancy knowed me, and fer a hull week I wuz a stranger in my own hum.

Our dog tried to bite me; the hoss kicked me; the cow wouldn't let me milk her and I couldn't git within gun-shot of anything on the place, and when we went to church the minister preached a sermon 'bout "Dalila cuttin' Samson's hair," and everybody knowed he wuz hintin' at me.

Wall, the black is wore off my whiskers and my hair is growed out and yesterday I seen Nancy sharpenin' the sheep shears, so I suppose in a day or so I will be lookin' natural agin.

UNCLE JOSH AND THE INSURANCE COMPANY

LAST fall before corn shuckin' time, a feller cum 'long and wanted to insure me aginst accident fer twenty-five dollars a week. Wall, I told him I'd hed jest 'bout all the accidents a feller could have and live. I'd fell into the thrashin' machine and hed the well cave in on me and the Lord knows what else. But he talked me into it so I took out the insurance. Wall, the next day I went over to help Ezra Hoskins who wuz buildin' a new house. And Ezra sent me up on the fifth floor to take down a lot of brick that wuz up thar, so I got a rope and a pulley and rigged it up and tied one end of the rope to a barrel and the other end of the rope to a beam down in the cellar and then I loaded the durned old barrel full of bricks.

And I went down and untied the rope and let the durned thing down.

Wall, I think the durned old barrel wuz heavier than what I wuz and it started down and I started up. So I met it half way and it thought a good deal of me and went down with me agin. Wall, that wuz the fust accident and then I went up and hit the roof—that wuz the second accident. The durned old barrel hit the cellar floor and knocked the bottom out of it and I wuz heavier than the barrel and I started down and the barrel started up and I met it agin and what it didn't do to me in the fust place it done in the second place.

Wall, that wuz the third accident.

Then I hit the durned old floor and that wuz the fourth accident. The rope flew out of my hands and the barrel fell down and hit me on the head and that wuz the fifth accident.

Wall, I hed it all figured out that I would stay in bed jest about ten weeks and clar off the mortgage on the farm, but that durned insurance man cum 'round and sed that it wuz only one accident and that wuz all he would pay me fer and I stayed in bed four days and got eighteen dollars and thirty-six cents.

Gosh durned the blamed old insurance company anyway.

THE COUNTY FAIR AT PUNKIN CENTER

WALL, we jest hed our county fair down hum' at Punkin Center, and, gosh, I ain't got the noises out of my ears yit. Wall, fer several days we wuz purty busy gittin' ready fer it, everybody goin' to put some-thin' on exhibition and old Deacon Witherspoon wuz packin' some apples in a barrel and Jim Lawson cum 'long and he sed, "Deacon, don't look to me as though you wuz packin' them apples in the Christian spirit." And Deacon sez, "I ain't, I'm packin' 'em in a barrel."

Wall, Jim sez, "I notice you puttin' all the big red, rosy apples on top," and Deacon sez, "I'm packin' 'em accordin' to nature, Jim." And Jim sez, "How's that?" and Deacon sez, "Wall, you never seen any cream in the bottom of the crock, did you?"

Wall, our town wuz jest chuck full of people, gosh, they wuz sleepin' everywhar and Ezra Hoskins' tavern wuz so full he hed to put a lot of 'em sleepin' in the church to sleep, and 'long in the night some time we heerd the church bells ringin' and calculated as how thar must be a fire and he sent his boy Rube over to the church to see what wuz the matter and Rube cum back and sed that feller in pew seventeen wants another hymn book fer a piller.

Wall, sir, they hed a lot of shows on the ground. One of 'em Deacon Witherspoon sed we ought to be sure and see becoz it wuz taken right from Scripture, that portion of it whar a gal named Salome danced in front of King Herod. We went in to see it and the program sed that Salome would dance with seven veils. Well, mebbe Salome did have seven veils once, but it looked to me as though she lost six of 'em.

Old Deacon Witherspoon fainted and we hed to pour ice water on him and let him smell camphor to bring him to. Wall, a little ways down the street in another tent thar wuz another gal dancin' a dance called, "The Dance of Venus." Wall, sir, them two tents were jest chucked full all the time. I never seen our folks so anxious to study Scripture and astronomy.

Then thar wuz a show in a tent called, "Vaud-e-valley." And I went in to see it and a feller cum out on the platform. They sed he wuz a magician and he ast anybody in the crowd to give him a book. Wall, they handed him up a book and he wrapped a handkerchief 'round it, a towel 'round it, and a bed sheet 'round it, and a comferter 'round it, put it in a piller and they blindfolded him and he read jest what wuz in the book and Hi Sprossby wuz thar with his gal and she sed, "Hiram, let's get out of here. I got one of your letters in my pocket and the fust thing we know that durn fool will be readin' it."

Then we went down to look at the stock and thar wuz a lot of hogs on exhibition and Jim got to lookin' at some of 'em. He sed to the feller what owned 'em, "They look kind of peculiar. How did you fatten 'em?" The feller sed, "Wall, I turned 'em out in the pasture and let 'em git fat on grass." Jim sed, "Took quite a lot of time, didn't it?" The feller sed, "Yes, but what's time to a hog?"

Then thar wuz a feller thar hed a razor-back hog, and the feller what wuz givin' out the premiums awarded him fust premium. We wanted to know what fer. He sed, "On account of speed," and we ast him, "What speed hed to do with a hog," and he sed, wall, out whar he lived, if you hed a hog what couldn't out run the neighbors, you might as well not have a hog.

UNCLE JOSH AT THE BUG HOUSE

'LONG last spring I wuz due down to the county seat, to Sanford and nothin' would do old Jim Lawson but he must go 'long. He sed thar warn't much doin' 'round hum', and he would go down to the county seat with me and mebbe he could git a job on the jury bein' as how I hed a job bein' a witness. Wall, we got down thar and I sed to Jim, "Whar we goin' to stop at?" and Jim sed, "Wall, I dunno. I ain't bin down here in quite a spell, but I got a friend here whose got a hotel and his name is Bug. Let's go over to the Bug House."

Gosh, Jim wuz jest crazy to git into the Bug House, and we went over thar and Jim introduced me to Mr. Bug and Lady Bug and Miss Bug and all the little Bugs. Wall, they showed us up to a room, made us comfortable and Jim got to lookin' 'round and Jim sez, "That's a purty good bed, Bug."

Wall, it wuz jest a little might chilly fer that early in the fall and I sed I guessed we will have to have a little fire, Bug. Wall, after we went down to the dinin' room to eat supper and got to eatin' and Jim sed, "I am purty hungry and so I guess I'll have another pertater, Bug."

Wall, after supper Bug wuz out in the yard choppin' kindlin' fer the next mornin' and up cum a thunder storm and it got to thunderin' and lightnin' and Jim went out and sed, "I guess you better cum in or you will git struck by lightnin', Bug." Wall, Bug he took the tumble, Bug did, and cum into the house and we set 'round 'til bed time and then went up to bed and I

heard a noise out in the hall and, gosh, thar wuz the hired girl kissin' Bug.

And I jest cum to the conclusion that he wuz a purty sly old Bug. Wall, next mornin' I went over to the courthouse and they put me on the witness stand but the lawyer sed he couldn't accept my testimony becoz I hed jest cum out of the Bug House.

Wall, I got ready to go back hum and I went over to the hotel after Jim and the sheriff wuz thar and he sed the way Jim hed bin carryin' on he guesses he would keep him in the Bug House.

THE PHOTOPLAY OF LIFE

A Descriptive Monologue

I present for your amusement
Some characters I've seen—
Devotees of life's drama
As portrayed upon the screen.
I'll have them play their various parts,
Father, mother, sweetheart, wife—
And give you vivid sketches
From the photoplay of life.

ACT I

SCENE.—*A ticket window at a moving picture theatre. The characters, two young girls. MABEL, the ticket seller, with hair elaborately dressed, is busy making change when AGNES comes up.*

MABEL. Why, Agnes! I didn't know you was home. When'd ya git back?

AGNES. On the four-thirty. Say, who'd you think was on the train?

MABEL. Who?

AGNES. Oh, guess.

MABEL. The one who travels for that house in N-e-w Y-o-r-k?

AGNES. No, not him. This 'un is a lot niftier. A regular jazz hound.

MABEL. Oh, I can't guess who.

AGNES. Who was it?—Guess.

MABEL. No, you tell me.

AGNES (*looking over shoulder at man*). Oh, did you want to buy a ticket? What did I think you wanted—didn't think. Maybe you wanted a hair-cut. You need one bad enough.—Fresh! Well, I'll have you know if I do have a lot myself, it's all my own. Never knew how rude people could be until I got back home. It's so different in Chicago, Mabel. I don't think I'll ever be able to live in this little dink town again.—I'm going to miss the cabarets awfully. What's that? Do I think this is a telephone booth? (*Stares at woman who is trying to purchase a ticket.*) You want to buy a ticket? Well, buy it if you have the money. What's your hurry? There is three shows. I hope she has to stand up. Have any gum, dearie? Thanks. (*Takes gum out of wrapper and chews.*) He is going to drive out from Chicago in his car.

MABEL. What's his name? You haven't told me yet.

AGNES. Oh, he has the most distinguished name, Rosenheim. He's French, you know. He was just leaving home. He didn't have time to take me to see his folks. He lives in the most aristocratic part of Chicago; South Halstead Villa. (*Woman pushes her aside.*) For heaven's sake let her have a ticket—one ticket—and she's got four kids. Did you ever see such nerve? You wouldn't see that in Chicago.

MANAGER. Are you going in?

AGNES. What is it to-night?

MANAGER. "The Three Musketeers."

AGNES. No, I don't think so. I never did care for those Shakespeare films. Mr. Rosenheim took me to see Charley Chaplin and the Kid, when I was in the city. He is going to send me the book; I am just crazy to read it. What's that? (*Looks at fellow who interrupts her visit with MABEL.*) I am crazy enough to

read anything! Well, what nerve! There is four hundred people waiting to buy tickets? That so? Well, it just goes to show the poor taste of people in a small town. Good-bye, Mabel.

ACT II

In the play that I'm producing
The curtain ne'er goes down;
The scene it is located
In each hamlet, vale and town.
The actors who portray the parts—
Ambition, miser, care and strife—
Are just the human family,
In the photoplay of life.

SCENE.—*Same as ACT I.*

(*Characters—The TICKET SELLER and MRS. J. W. M. SMITH, III, who is president of the Drama League. She is elaborately gowned and talks very rapidly.*)

MRS. SMITH. Has the picture started, Miss Armstrong? I have a perfect abhorrence of seeing a picture unless one sees the first reel. I would have been here sooner but my car is in the garage having our coat of arms put on it. Since we were in the alley with France and England — Oh, dear, I mean we were allies; how stupid of me. We have looked up our family history. We find that our ancestors were of the early Norman and Roman conquerors of France and the British Isles. So our coat of arms is a herald rampant on a blue field with a lion and a unicorn and

the flure dee leeze—that is the coat of arms of France, you know. So we are having it put on all our cars, except the Ford.

My car is not finished, so I was compelled to wait until Mr. Smith came home from the bank and I used his car. He was detained on some business pertaining to the Government. The Secretary of the Treasury has written Mr. Smith a personal letter in regard to it. And it took hours to denature the code. Oh, yes, all these Government letters are written in code. If you read it, it wouldn't mean a thing to you at all, no one in the bank but Mr. Smith is allowed to have the code, and as brilliant as my husband is, he has to figure it all out. It keeps him so late. And as I said I had to wait until he came home from the bank in order to have his car.

(*Looks scornfully over right shoulder.*) I beg your pardon—you want a ticket? Well, I assure you, you are not any more anxious to purchase one than I. (*Turning back to ticket seller.*) Have you my reservation, Miss Armstrong?

MISS ARMSTRONG. There are no reserves. I am sorry.

MRS. SMITH. I told the manager very distinctly that I wished a reservation for this particular picture, —rather old but worth while—Yes, (*Looks at advertisement in lobby of theatre.*) this is it—"The Creation of a Nation."

MISS ARMSTRONG. "Birth of a nation."

MRS. SMITH. Yes, I know, but I think "Birth of a Nation" sounds rather vulgar, don't you? I like "creation" much better—it is not quite so "bazar" as the French would say, and the Lord knows the French can be "bazar" if anyone can. We saw and heard so much of it when Mr. Smith and I were in

Europe. You know Mr. Smith's bank has business relations with a bank in Paris. Isn't that thrilling?

Beg pardon, you want to buy a ticket? You told me that before. Oh, did you!! Miss Armstrong, for heaven's sake let this *person* have a ticket. Mr. Smith dislikes to have me come to these picture houses; he says there is always such a rabble. How long will it last?

MISS ARMSTRONG. Two hours.

MRS. SMITH. Oh, that long? Yes, I know it takes time to tell the story. I just wanted to know so that I can tell the chauffeur. He is so punctilious. You might say we imported him—he is English. He was our chauffeur when we were in Europe. He served over there. He said at one time they were going to compel all subjects of the Crown to serve—"subscription," I think they call it.

MISS ARMSTRONG. Pardon me, but the picture is half over now.

MRS. SMITH. Why didn't you tell me? You couldn't? Didn't want to interrupt my conversation? Why, I scarcely spoke to you. I am not in the habit of holding conversations with menials. My only reason for seeing the picture was because I am president of the Drama League and they asked me to read a paper on the merits of the picture from a dramatic standpoint. But it doesn't matter. I can read them my paper on Europe from a personal view. 'Twill be much more interesting, I'm sure. Home, Algernon.

ACT III

The scene it now is shifted,
 To the city's busy mart;
 Despondency the actor
 Who plays the leading part.
 It is an oft told story,
 The irony of fate;
 How charity begins at home—
 But oft begins too late.

SCENE.—*A police court.*

(*The characters—THE MAGISTRATE, POLICE OFFICER, COURT ATTENDANTS and a woman, ANNIE BLAKE—poorly dressed.*)

MAGISTRATE. Call Annie Blake.—Is your name Annie Blake?

ANNIE BLAKE. It is, your Honor.

MAGISTRATE. Raise your hand and be sworn.—Officer Ryan, be sworn—Officer, what are the charges against this woman?

OFFICER. Stealing, your Honor.

MAGISTRATE. You arrested her?

OFFICER. I did, your Honor.

MAGISTRATE. State the circumstances under which you made this arrest.

OFFICER. I was called into the Palace Theatre. The head usher had detained this woman upon suspicion; a lady's purse had been snatched when in the lobby of the theatre. The management asked for this woman's arrest. She was searched by the matron at

headquarters. The matron found she had stolen the purse as suspected.

MAGISTRATE. Annie Blake, you have heard the officer's testimony. Have you anything to say in your defence?

ANNIE BLAKE. I have, your Honor, more to say than perhaps you will have time and patience to hear. But I beg of you to hear my story.—Then condemn me if you will.

MAGISTRATE. I will hear your story; go on.

ANNIE BLAKE. All the officer has told you is true, but he couldn't tell you all because he did not know. A month ago I was discharged from the last job I was able to git. From lack of sufficient food I didn't have the strength to do the work required of me. I walked the streets for miles in search of honest employment. Always ter be told, "Won't do." I pawned every article I possessed in an effort to keep body and soul together. I tried every avenue but one—that of dishonor. But all to no avail. I asked fer aid at the Bureau of Charities but was told my case was one fer another department. At this department I was told they wouldn't be able to reach my case fer days and what was I to do in the meantime? I tried, your Honor—you will never know how hard I tried. Then came the last blow and the hardest one of all. Thrown out of the room for non-payment of rent! At the free dispensary where I applied for medicine for a cough they told me they couldn't do nothing fer me—I had an advanced case of tuberculosis.

MAGISTRATE. Where were you reared?

ANNIE BLAKE. A little town, about fifty miles from here.

MAGISTRATE. What brought you to the city?

ANNIE BLAKE. The man I loved wanted me to

come. He needed help. You see, your Honor, he made a mistake but was goin' straight; no one but me would believe him. God knows he was innocent. You just couldn't understand. I think sometimes these man-made laws you deal in every day make you blind to real justice. If his mother were alive she would understand—I begged for him when his own people had refused him help. Then discouraged and sick, hunted by the law, he tried to take his life. . . . They brought him to me and said good care would save him. We didn't have any money. I went out on the street—I was frantic with grief and—and then, your Honor, I—I stole!

MAGISTRATE. I will be compelled to hold you for the grand jury. And this man, he must appear too. Your case is one for a higher court. You will require legal defense. Have you an attorney?

ANNIE BLAKE. I have an attorney, your Honor.

MAGISTRATE. Who is he?

ANNIE BLAKE. He is the one who said, "Let ye who are without sin among ye cast the first stone," and he pleads his cases in a higher court. And when he represents *you* in that court, why, your Honor, perhaps *you*, not your son and I, will be found guilty.

MAGISTRATE. What! My son? Police officer, dismiss the case. My girl, take this money and let me help. . . . He was a good boy.—Oh, if his mother had lived.

ANNIE BLAKE. I thank you; your father heart is touched. (*Goes to door and turns around.*) I neglected to say my Bill is your son in a general sense. I'll save him from hell or die. But, your Honor, as to the sob about him bein' your kid—say that's what our gang calls Bolsheviki. Thanks fer the money.

ACT IV

In the reel that's never ending
The action still goes on—
New scenes are ever added
Of sorrow, mirth or song.
They come and go, these human hearts;
Sadness, laughter, always rife;
And they pass like apparitions
In the photoplay of life.

SCENE.—*Lobby of the theatre after the picture is over.*

(The characters—An old gentleman and his wife who have been in to see the picture and the manager of the theatre.)

MANAGER. How did you like the picture, Mr. Williams?

MR. WILLIAMS. Wall, I liked it purty good in spots. You know I seed Abe Lincoln a good many times when I was in the Army of the Potomac, and I jist wanted to see if any feller could make his self look like Old Abe, so I —

MRS. WILLIAMS. Yes, he hain't talked about anything else but seein' this picter ever since he heerd it was comin' and he's bin worryin' about the weather—so afraid it would rain, and last night he sot up 'til plumb midnight to see if thar was any sign of bad weather, and all day he kept lookin' at the sky and at the wind mill to see which way the wind was blowin'.

And it just seemed like he had his mind sot on seein' that picter like his salvation depended on it.

MR. WILLIAMS. Wall, I wanted to see where ——

MRS. WILLIAMS. And he read all that advertisin' over and over agin, and kept us all up late at night tellin' us about it. President Lincoln and General Grant and Robert E. Lee and the battle of Gettysburg and Pickett's charge. Land sakes!

MANAGER. Weren't you interested in it, Mrs. Williams?

MRS. WILLIAMS. Yes, but I've bin hearin' about it fer the last fifty years! Of late he hasn't said much about it, but when the war in Europe broke out and our country got tangled up in it, then I do believe he'd have enlisted if they'd let him.

MR. WILLIAMS. Wall, I wasn't drafted t'other time. I was campaignin' and been wounded once at the Battle of the Wilderness afore they was any draft. I'll ——

MRS. WILLIAMS. Wall, I'm glad he's seen the picter and I hope he can get his nateral sleep now. I suppose though he'll talk about things in that picter for years to come. Wall, it might as well be that as anything else. He is a great talker—all the Williamses was great talkers. His father was an auctioneer: so I suppose he comes by his talkin' naterly. Now, on my side of the family none of them was given to talkin' much. I never could see what people could find to talk about, but it ain't any trouble for none of the Williamses to find something to talk about; I've known them to talk fer hours and hours on how to ween a calf, when all they hed to do was to shet it away from its mother and feed it on skimmed milk.

MANAGER. Well, I am glad you got to see the picture, Mr. Williams, and I hope you liked it.

MRS. WILLIAMS. Liked it, why he just sot there spell-bound. I couldn't jest understand some of it, but he never took his eyes off it the whole time it was goin' on. Never wiped his specs once; a thing I hain't seen him miss doin' since he fust wore 'em.

MR. WILLIAMS. We sort of killed two birds with one stone—you know our youngest boy is comin' home from the hospital to-day. Both our boys went with 'em over there and they warn't drafted neither—both enlisted.

MRS. WILLIAMS. It made us awful short-handed on the farm too.

MR. WILLIAMS. We worked the farm, Mother, when thar warn't none but you and me. I guess we got along somehow: so we come to get our boy. He's well, now, Uncle Sam says, and I thought we'd come in to see the picter. I sot in thar and looked at it, but I don't know what it was about—I didn't see much of it.

MANAGER. You didn't see it?

MR. WILLIAMS. No, sir, not a bit of it; all I seen was them two boys of our'n off thar in a forrin' land whar they don't even speak our language. I seen 'em on the boat goin' thar dodgin' mines and submarines. I thought how we wondered if they'd git thar and we hoped and prayed they would; I seen 'em in a thousand different ways and sufferin' and I thought of how we'd wondered if they'd come home again or not. But I wouldn't have stopped 'em if I could. No, sir, I wouldn't. I encouraged 'em to go and they didn't need much tellin'. I'm mighty proud of it.

MANAGER. What did you say to 'em, Mr. Williams?

MR. WILLIAMS. Didn't say a durn word. That was one time, Mother, when a Williams couldn't talk.

MRS. WILLIAMS. But gosh, he can talk now. He sezs we're goin' to have world peace. I hope so, but

unless he quits talkin' so much I think our house will be the last place to git it. Come on, Pa, let's be goin' if you've got your talk out.

UNCLE JOSH'S TROUBLES IN A HOTEL

WALL, sir, here I am agin and in trouble as usual. The landlord put me out of the hotel coz I left the gas burnin' all night, and he hed a sine up thar not to blow it out. Wall, I hed to go out to the restaurant to git somethin' to eat. I got into one of 'em and got sot down and a gal brought me a bowl of oyster soup to start my dinner with. Gosh, it hed one poor little half starved oyster down in the bowl and he wuz eetin' up the crackers fast as I could break 'em in. Wall, I give him all the crackers I hed and then I got out of thar. I went over to another hotel and I seen a sine what sed, "Safe in Office." I wanted to be in the safest place so I staid in the office. I got to lookin' 'round and I seen a little macheen. It hed a sine over it what sed, "Talkin' macheen. Drop a nickel in the place whar you put the nickels in and you'll heer a feller sing a song or make a speech or somethin' of that kind." Wall, I dropped a nickel in and jest then thar wuz a band commenced playin' 'round thar somewhat and I went out to see the parade go by. I don't know what becum' of it, it didn't go by the hotel and when I cum back in, the macheen wuz stopped and I didn't git to heer what it hed to say. I noticed over to one side, a little room, it only hed one little sofa in it and I thought it wouldn't be any harm if I sot down in thar a spell. Wall, a feller cum 'long and seen me settin' in thar and he got madder than a wet hen about it. He jest walked in and slammed the door, grabbed hold of a rope and pulled me right up, room and all. I found it warn't his room neither, the room

belonged to some lady in the hotel, I seen her name over the door when I got out. Ella Vator I think wuz the lady's name. Gosh, if I knowed it wuz Ella's room I wouldn't went into it. I got a room and I hed quite a time gittin' the lamp put out, I couldn't git the chimney off of it. I sot thar and blowed at it 'til I wuz red in the face and out of breath. And I hed to hang my boot leg over it to make it dark. Wall, that durned thing got to burnin' my boot so I jest took out my jackknife and I cut that little green string and I never seen anything cut up so many capers. It jest ruined my jackknife. I put out every light in the durned tavern. Gosh, I made 'em all go to bed.

FIDDLED OUT OF HOUSE AND HOME

(*A Rural Sketch*)

UNCLE JOSH, *postmaster and grocery store keeper.*

CINDY, *village pest of Punkin Center.*

HELEN WINTER, *traveling saleslady.*

SCENE.—*A country store. Door on right side of room. Large window with white ruffled curtains. Post-office fixtures are at left of window. An organ is near by and a violin and bow are on top. Beside them a large yellow brick. The entire right wall is covered with shelves of groceries. A weighing scale is on counter which is in front of grocery shelves. JOSH comes in door carrying mail-bag and crosses to side of room that is fitted with post-office fixtures. He throws mail-bag on floor.*

JOSH. Wall, if I've told Jim Lawson once, I guess I've told him a hundred times not to throw his mail-bag off in the road but to hang it up in the forks of the tree, but it don't do a bit of good. Now I know what R. F. D. means, and it ain't rural free delivery neither. One of these days I'll report him to the Pustmaster General. Then he'll lose his job and it pays him forty dollars a year, and forty dollars is forty dollars these days. Why, he could purty nigh buy a hog with that. Wonder that gal of his'n ain't round. Wall, thar is jest one of two things. She's either asleep or in mischief. And she don't sleep much.

CINDY (*heard outside, stamps feet and cries*). Now, you let me alone!

JOSH. No, she ain't asleep. (CINDY *enters stumbling.*) Now, set down before you break somethin'. Set down and don't git up fer a week. Don't you move or I'll shake the life out of ye.

CINDY. Oh, you haven't got me scared a little bit.

(*Gets up and dances round.*)

JOSH (*shakes finger at CINDY*). Suppose you'll be singin' it next.

CINDY (*sings—"They Haven't Got Me Scared a Little Bit"*).

My Ma says I'm a most precocious child.
 My Dad says I am just a little wild.
 My aunt she says it's just a sin
 The antics I am humored in.
 My uncle says that I am not to blame
 That all of them were very much the same.
 The neighbors say they'll move away
 If I'm let loose another day.

But they haven't got me scared a little bit,
 And they needn't think that I am goin' to quit.
 I put something in the jelly
 That will make it awful smelly
 And they haven't got me scared a little bit.

No they haven't got me scared a little bit.
 Not a teenty weenty little bitty bit.
 My Ma says she'll chastise me
 And she'll try to civilize me
 But she hasn't got me scared a little bit.

My Ma says I am getting most too big
 To play out in the mud hole like a pig.
 And when I want to telephone
 She says now you leave that alone.

There ain't a thing that I'm allowed to do.
 My sister says I keep them in a stew.
 On one thing sure they all agree,
 That's blaming everything on to me.

But they haven't got me scared a little bit.
 If I get the blame I might as well be it.
 When they say "you will rue it,"
 Right then I go and do it.
 Oh, they haven't got me scared a little bit.

No they haven't got me scared a little bit.
 But their scolding at me doesn't make a hit.
 I'm going to be a hermit
 Then I can holler dern it.
 Oh, they haven't got me scared a little bit.

My teacher wants me taken out of school.
 She says that I have broken every rule.
 My Grandma says it's plain to see
 Some evil spirit's ruling me.
 My brother says that I'm an awful brick.
 There's no kid in that town that I can't lick.
 The preacher says he's prayed for me
 A better little girl to be.

But they haven't got me scared a little bit.
 You can bet your bottom dollar I am it.
 I ain't no little sissy.
 When I'm gone they're going to miss me.
 Oh, they haven't got me scared a little bit.

No, they haven't got me scared a little bit,
 Although I know it's very hard for me to sit.
 I ain't afraid of teacher
 'Cause I saw her kiss the preacher
 And they haven't got me scared a little bit.

CINDY. I'm mad, Uncle Josh.

JOSH. What's the trouble now?

CINDY. The kids said my Pa was a slacker. I told them he wasn't neither. Was my Pa a slacker, Uncle Josh?

JOSH. Wall, that depends a good deal on how you mean it; if you mean hard work, he's a slacker, but if you mean drinking liquor, then he's a patriotic volunteer.

CINDY. Uncle Josh, I brought you a bottle of cider.

JOSH. Who's been makin' cider?

CINDY. Pa made it.

JOSH (*drinks cider*). How much did your Pa make?

CINDY. Two barrels. Ain't it good?

JOSH. Good? Gosh, if he'd hed another apple he'd a made another barrel, wouldn't he?

CINDY (*laughs*). Oh, Uncle Josh! Say, did Pa bring the mail?

JOSH. Wall, he cum' mighty nigh it. I hed to go out in the road and git it.

CINDY. Any for any of our folks?

JOSH. I don't know. I hain't sorted it out yit. You cum back after while. I got a lot of things to do now. (*CINDY remains seated and chewing gum. JOSH adjusts glasses, unlocks mail-bag and starts to sort the mail.*) I sed, cum' back after while.

CINDY. I heerd you.

(*Laughs and makes a face at JOSH.*)

JOSH. Wall, how you goin' to cum' back after while if you stay here now?

CINDY. Well, if I stay here now, I'll be here when it's after while. W-o-n-'t I?

JOSH. Yes, I guess you will, but you go out and hunt up "after while," and bring it back with you.

CINDY (*rising to go*). You don't know whar they live, do you?

JOSH (*starts toward CINDY*). Git out, git out of here. [*Exit CINDY laughing.*]

JOSH (*starts to sort mail*). Thar's Nancy Weaver's helping hand. She's bin after that ten times in two days and thar ain't but two mails a day. (*Picks up card.*) Thar's a pustal card fer that city gal what's boardin' at Sprossby's. She gits one or two of 'em every day; that feller of hers writes 'em in shorthand. I could tell him a few things, but any feller what's mean enuff to write shorthand on a pustal card I wouldn't tell him a durn thing. That looks like a purty heavy letter. (*Weighs letter on grocery scales.*) No, no it ain't overweight, but I kin use them two cents. I never do have enuff change. Thar's a pustal card from the Wider Jones's boy. He wuz a soldier over in France. (*Reads card.*) Jest sezs he's well.

Poor devil he's bin in the hospital every since the war. Soon as Cindy cums back I'll send it right over to his mother. Any mail cumin' from our boys is goin' to be special delivery in this pust office. We're not goin' to fergit 'em and what they done fer us, if your Uncle has his way. That's Lige Willitt's weakly budget. Lige will be in fer it after while. Wall, if I ain't through readin' it, it didn't cum; they only print one column of the paper here in our town. The rest of it cums already printed. I wuz jest gittin' interested in a story once when it wound up with the hero gittin' cured with Peruma. (*Reads the paper.*) Punkin Center topics. Wall, wall, the Punkin Center baseball club beat Hickory Corner a hundred and six to ninety-seven. Gosh all hemlock, Hank Weaver knocked a fly ball and hit the stained glass window in the Baptist Church and knocked out the four Apostles.

(*Laughs.*) Now they're goin' to move the church, coz it stands so close to the ball ground, it interferes with the game. Everybody wanted to whip the 'mpire, so they loaded the county jail on a wagon, hauled it out to the ball ground and locked the 'mpire up in it and let him 'mpire the game out of the winder and couldn't a durned one git at him. (*Laughs.*) Wall, I want to know, Hi Atkins got some wooden nest eggs and he put 'em under his old settin' hen and she hatched out four block head chickens and a woodpecker. (*Laughs.*) Jim Lawson went down to the county seat and got his hair cut and the barber scared a woodchuck and two flyin' squirrels. Wall, they oughter let Jim's hair grow and set him over agin. Wall, wall, Lige Willitt has got locomotor atacksia. Now he's got the durned thing, I bet he don't know how to run it. (*Laughs. Whistle of railroad train in the distance.*) Thar's the nine-thirty, late as usual. That train never wuz on time but once, and then it wuz ten minnits late. (*Continues to read paper.*) Gee whiz, Jim Lawson got some colored Easter eggs and he wanted to hide 'em from the children so he took 'em out in the barn and put 'em under the old Plymouth Rock hen and the rooster cum 'long and looked at 'em and then went over in the next yard and whipped the peacock. (*Laughs.*) Don't it cheer you up to git a paper from your own hum town.

When you're away from hum and in a forrin' land,
You got the blues to beat the band.
I'll tell you something that will drive away that frown,
Just get the paper from your own hum town.

It tells about the weather and it tells about the crops.
All the gossip in the barber shops.

And sometimes they print it up side down.
Old-fashioned papers from your old hum town.

Haskins children have the measles
Deacon Green has got the gout.
Abe Sprossby has got religion and he hasn't found it
out.

And they've got a bran new baby at the hum of Hiram
Brown.

Some items from the paper from your old hum town.

Hank Weaver tree'd a rabbit in a holler log. He
took a stick and poked him out. . . . They took
Hank hum and locked him up in the barn and fed
him his meals on the end of a pole. . . . If the
wind gits in the right direction, I think they'll let
Hank out Sunday.

(Enter CINDY excited and out of breath.)

CINDY. Gee whiz—Pa's got a passenger, first one
he's hed since fair time. It's a lady too. Gee w-h-i-z!
Uncle Josh, she's all dressed up like a cirkus horse. I
seen her git off the keers. Oh, you ought to have seen
Pa puttin' on frills. *(Laughs, waves arms and calls as
through a megaphone.)* "Transfer to all parts of the
city. Bus to the Commercial House, goin' right up.
Baggage!! Transfer, Lady! Baggage to all parts of
the city." *(Laughs.)* Oh, you ought to have seen
Pa bowin' and scrapin'. To hear him tell her, you'd
think Punkin Center was a town.

JOSH *(shaking head)*. Wall, Cindy, you may git
small-pox and live, you may git yaller fever and pull
through, but if you ever git lock jaw, you'll bust.
Here is a pustal card fer Mrs. Jones. You take it
right over to her and don't lose it.

(CINDY looks out door and jumps up and down with excitement.)

CINDY. Pa's bringin' her here. I'll bet she's a agent or somethin'.

JOSH. Wonder what she's comin' here fer. Mebbe she's pust office inspector. I'm mighty glad I got the mail-bag out of the road afore she got here. She won't find out anything 'bout Jim from me. Jim Lawson is a good feller. Jim soldiered with me all through the Rebellion; he's entitled to all he gits from the Government and more too.

HELEN (*enters with sample case in hand*). Is this Mr. Weatherby?

JOSH. Yes, that's me.

(*He shakes hands with HELEN.*)

HELEN. I am representing Rosenbaum & Company, New York, general merchandise. We carry a full line of everything. Clothing, boots, shoes, hats, caps, dry-goods, hardware, queensware, groceries, notions, stationary, tobacco, cigars and sundries, teas, coffees and spices.

JOSH. Don't mean to say that you are a drummer?

HELEN. Yes, I believe that is what you would call me, but I like the name of traveling saleslady much better. Rather more distinctive. Don't you think so?

JOSH. Wall, I wouldn't wonder. Wimmen folks are doin' most everything these days, but I never expected to see one of 'em bein'—bein' what you jest sed.

HELEN. Let it go as drummer. I never did either but—well, here is my card.

JOSH (*takes card and looks from glasses*). Now I

wonder whar I put my specs. I can't read a thing without 'em.

(*Both look in chair on table, organ, etc.*)

HELEN (*looks at JOSH*). I think you have them on.

(*Laughs.*)

JOSH. Gosh, I guess I'm gettin' so I can't remember much better than I can see. (*Wipes glasses on handkerchief, takes card and chuckles.*) Helen Winter, eh? (*Chuckles.*)

HELEN. Yes, anything humorous about that?

JOSH. No, I wuz jest wonderin' what it wuz in summer?

HELEN. Come now, Mr. Weatherby, that's an awful old joke.

JOSH. Yes, the old ones go the best here in Punkin Center. Hank Weaver's got one he's bin tellin' fer twenty years. I never seen the point to it 'til yesterday.

HELEN. What is the joke, Mr. Weatherby?

JOSH. I can't tell it very well, but it's a mighty good joke. *Why does a mouse spin?*

HELEN. Now let me see, why does a mouse spin—why *does* a mouse spin? Well, that's a poser. I am afraid I will have to give it up.

JOSH. I thought you would. Becoz the fewer the higher.

HELEN. You will pardon me, Mr. Weatherby, but I can't see any sense to that.

JOSH. Thar ain't any—that's the joke—have a cigar!

HELEN. Why, Mr. Weatherby, I don't smoke.

JOSH. Gosh, I'm fergittin' agin. I always keep 'em fer drummers.

HELEN. For drummers?

JOSH. Yes, I tell 'em Hank's joke, and if they laugh I give 'em a cigar and charge it to Hank—Hank always treats when they laugh at his joke.

HELEN. Well, Mr. Weatherby, can I show you our line? We have some fine novelties, especially in clothing; everything is so clever this year.

JOSH. No, I guess not. Jest bought a bill of goods. You see I've jest got back from New York.

HELEN. *New York!* Did you have a nice time?

JOSH. I hain't got through tellin' 'em 'bout it yit and I guess they've ast me a million questions. What do you s'pose Lige Willitt ast me?

HELEN. I don't think I could ever guess. What was it?

JOSH. He wanted to know who wuz runnin' the hotel down thar? (*Both laugh.*) Yes, I wuz down thar two whole weeks. I've bought everything I'll need fer the next two years.

HELEN. But the styles will change before then.

JOSH. Not in Punkin Center. Why last week Nancy Weaver put on her grandmother's weddin' dress and it's jest like I seen 'em wearin' in New York.

HELEN. How about canned goods? Peaches—pears—tomatoes—sweet corn, berries of all kinds?

JOSH. No, can't sell 'em here, everybody puts up their own.

HELEN (*sadly*). So you don't think you'll need anything to-day?

JOSH. No, not fer a good many days. Don't sell much here. I keep store mostly to have a place fer the pust office. (*Proudly.*) I'm pust master too.

HELEN. Well, I will say good-bye, Mr. Weatherby.

JOSH. You might as well wait here as at the hotel.

The hack stops here fer the mail anyhow. Set down and make yourself to hum.

(*Enter CINDY grinning and twisting skirt with fingers.*)

CINDY. Uncle Josh, see what I got.

JOSH. I can't see very well—what is it, Cindy?

CINDY (*takes money out of mouth*). See, Uncle Josh, it's a nickel.

JOSH. Who give you the nickel, Cindy?

CINDY. School teacher give it to me to come in and see how she had her hair done up. (*Laughs.*) I ain't goin' to tell her 'til she gives me another nickel. (*Laughs.*) She can't do her hair up that way anyhow. She's only got a little hair, and Ma says what she has got is false. (*Laughs.*)

HELEN (*picking up gold brick*). Why, Mr. Weatherby, what is this for?

JOSH. I'm goin' to give it to Sary Ann Weaver's baby to cut his eye teeth on.

HELEN. To cut his eye teeth on?

JOSH. Yep, that's the way I cut mine.

HELEN (*discovers violin on organ*). Who plays the violin?

JOSH. Thar ain't no one plays on it now. Martha used to. Cindy plays some on the organ, but no one plays on the fiddle since Martha went away.

HELEN. Is Martha your daughter?

JOSH. She wuz and she wuz a good girl, too.

HELEN. Where is Martha now?

JOSH (*points out of window*). Wall, I guess you didn't see the church, as you cum from the depot? Martha's in the little graveyard thar by the church.

HELEN. Oh, I am so sorry I spoke.

JOSH. Martha liked that old fiddle in the evenin'.

After I'd shet up the store she used to play fer me and Mother. (*Wipes glasses and clears throat.*) Mother's gone too. She didn't stay long after Martha went away. The fiddle is thar jest as Martha left it. I've hed lots of chances to sell it. While I'm not a rich man, Miss Winter, still thar ain't money enuff in the world to buy it.

HELEN. I am so sorry I spoke about it. I am sure you must have loved her dearly. Would you like to hear again some of Martha's music? I would be glad to play for you.

JOSH. I'd be glad to have you. Cindy kin play the organ with you. She knows all them tunes. She used to play fer Martha. I chase her out of here 'bout a dozen times a day but gosh, I'd be mighty lonesome without her.

HELEN. Will you help me, Cindy?

CINDY (*legs wound round chair*). I don't keer.

(*While HELEN tunes violin, CINDY wipes hands on dress then offers UNCLE JOSH last bite of pickle. HELEN and CINDY play, "Silver Threads Among the Gold." JOSH listens to music as he looks out window; he wipes eyes and loosens his collar. At last his head sinks in the palms of his hands as the music stops. Then he straightens up, clears throat and speaks slowly.*)

JOSH. How do you travel fer your company? Do you git regular wages or part of what you sell?

HELEN. I guess you mean, am I traveling on salary or commission?

JOSH. That's—I guess that's it.

HELEN. I am traveling on commission.

JOSH. Are you doing purty well?

HELEN. I am sorry to say I am not. I haven't made

a sale in three weeks. I am afraid if I don't get some business pretty soon, I'll be called in. I wouldn't care for myself, but it would be, oh so hard on Mother. Mother worked and deprived herself of necessities just to give me a chance with my music. She'd always wanted to "do things" when a girl but her father said "No." I was to be all she had dreamed of that was great and successful. I never knew of the sacrifice she was making 'til she took sick. Then in her delirium I learned the whole pitiful story. I took this work, hoping I could make enough to give her the care she must have to regain her strength. But it just seems no one will give me an order. I wonder if they would give me an order when the money would save my mother's life. I am all she has to depend on.

JOSH. I wuz jest thinkin' while you wuz playin', I didn't git any sugar while I wuz in New York. Don't know how I cum' to fergit it. We use a heap of sugar here at preservin' time. Guess Aunt Nancy Weaver uses all of two barrels. Never et any of Nancy's preserves, did you? They always take the premium at our county fair. You kin put me down fer ten barrels of sugar.

HELEN (*writing*). Any spices?

JOSH. Yep, two boxes of spices. Some extracts too.

HELEN. Anything else?

JOSH. Lord, yis; two barrels of coffee and one box of tea.

HELEN. Oolong or Hyson?

JOSH. Yes, I guess that's it, and twenty boxes of soap, the kind what gives prizes fer the wrappers.

HELEN. Why, who saves the wrappers?

JOSH. Cindy. She's got four hundred of 'em now and when she gits two thousand more, they're goin' to send her a picture of the soap factory. Send me one

crate of ax handles, one hundred boxes of canned goods, peaches, pears and anything of that sort.

HELEN. I thought your folks put up all their own.

JOSH. These are for summer boarders.

HELEN (*laughs*). I see.

JOSH. You can give me three bolts of muslin, six bolts of calico, two of sheeting, fifty dozen thread. Different kinds. Twenty dozen close pins, five kegs six-penny nails, fifty wash boards, two barrels of rice, one of molasses, one barrel of pickles, ten boxes of tobacker.

HELEN. What kind of tobacco?

JOSH. Smokeless.

HELEN. Smokeless tobacco? Why, I never heard of that kind.

JOSH. Lots of it used here. They chew it.

HELEN (*laughing*). Do you give cigars away with that?

JOSH. No, that ain't Hank Weaver's joke, but it's jest as old.

HELEN. Anything else?

JOSH. No, I guess that will be all fer this time.

HELEN. You wouldn't care if you gave me part of the money now, would you? It isn't really necessary, Mr. Weatherby, but if you could pay something on account it would help me, and we allow ten per cent. fer cash.

JOSH. Wall, thar is two hundred dollars. That's all I have jest now and that's tax money, but I jest reckon your Ma's life is worth that any day.

HELEN. Thank you, Mr. Weatherby. Now if you will sign these orders, there is something else there I would like to play then it will be about train time.

(*Hands JOSH order book.*)

JOSH. You go ahead and play. That train ain't never on time and if it is they got to wait fer the mail, and I hain't got it put up yit.

HELEN. Don't you play any instrument, Mr. Weatherby?

JOSH. Gosh no, I couldn't play a hand organ if you'd give me a receipt.

CINDY. Why, Uncle Josh, you can play on the mouth-organ. Git him to play it, lady, he can play it bully. Here it is.

(CINDY hands JOSH a harmonica from her apron pocket.)

HELEN. Please, Mr. Weatherby.

JOSH. Wall, I'll play one tune but it'll sound purty bad after your fiddlin'. (JOSH plays harmonica.) Now you play, Miss Winter, and I'll sign them orders. (HELEN and CINDY play "The Perfect Day.") Wall, I guess it's 'bout time fer the 'leven-thirty.

HELEN. Yes, I must be going. I want to make New Ipswich to-day.

JOSH. You go see Dave Martin over thar. Tell him I sent you. If that telephone wuz workin' I'd call him up, but it's out of kilter. From what Jim Lawson sed over it t'other day, I think it's burned out.

HELEN. Thank you, Mr. Weatherby, I'll do that. I'm sure our firm will be glad to have you for a regular customer. Good-bye. Thank you so much. Good-bye, Cindy. (Kisses CINDY.)

(HELEN exits. CINDY goes to organ and softly plays "Perfect Day." JOSH wipes eyes, picks up picture of MARTHA, adjusts glasses. Seats self and the 'phone bell rings. He goes to 'phone.)

JOSH. Hello! What's that? Yis, it's me. How

be ye? The crops is purty poor here, and lots of folks sick. What's that—you want to know somethin'? Wall? Yes, thar wuz a right likely lookin' gal here. No—no she wuz fine. You oughter heerd her play the fiddle. Gosh 'twas great. I'm talkin' too much? Jest answer your questions? Wall? Yis, she sold me a lot of things. You bet I paid her. Her Ma's sick and. What. Gosh all hemlock! Wall, Sherrif, I'll be eternally hornswaggled. (*Drops in chair.*)

CINDY (*comes and kneels at JOSH's knee*). What's the matter, Uncle Josh?

JOSH. Matter? Why, that gal's a swindler and unless the sherrif kin ketch her I've been fiddled out of house and hum.

THE VILLAGE GOSSIPS

JIM (*sound of horse's feet*). Whoa. How be you, Josh?

JOSH. Hello, Jim. How be you? What you got in the waggin?

JIM. Cider.

JOSH. Ain't makin' cider already, be ye?

JIM. Yep.

JOSH. Good cider?

JIM. Wall, if you want a drink, why don't you say so?

JOSH. Wall, I wouldnt mind.

JIM. Here's a gourd full.

JOSH (*drinks cider*). How much did ye make?

JIM. Nine barrell.

JOSH. Gosh. If ye hed another apple ye'd made ten, wouldnt ye?

JIM. Where be ye goin' with that ere fishin' pole? Goin' fishin'?

JOSH. No. Jest goin' down to the creek to give this here worm a few swimmin' lessons.

JIM. Huh, smart, ain't ye?

JOSH. Tolerably so. Did ye hear about Lige Wil-lit?

JIM. Now, what's he bin doin'?

JOSH. Wanted to keep his chickens frum gittin' cold, so he put whiskey in the chicken feed.

JIM. How did it work?

JOSH. Fust rate. One old hen got so durn drunk she laid ten eggs that day. Oh, say; did you hear about Hank Weaver?

JIM. Don't mean to say that he's bin arrested agin?

JOSH. No. He wuz down to the grocery store an' he seen that ere new fangled fan a runnin' an' he sed, "Ezra, ef ye don't let that ere squirrell out of that wheel he'll run his durn fool head off."

JIM. Oh, say, Josh. I hear Dave Martin has mortgaged his farm.

JOSH. Well, now; what fer?

JIM. Oh, count of that boy of his'n.

JOSH. Now what's he bin up to?

JIM. Well, I wouldnt care to hev ye repeat it, Josh; but Willit's folks say as how Jabe Fisher got a letter frum his gal what's in Bostin. An' she says as how he's in the Legislatur. Now it'll cost Dave a heap of money to git him out.

JOSH. Wall, thet boy allways was wild and fearless. He bruk the axe handle 'fore he left hum.

JIM. Ab Sprossby's got a new hoss.

JOSH. I want to know.

JIM. Yep. One day last week it was rainin', he wuz standin' out in the middle of the rud holdin' a umbrella over his hoss.

JOSH. Now what wuz he doin' that fer?

JIM. That's what we all wanted to know. Ab said he only hed the hoss a short spell an' the feller he got him of sed to be keerfull of him. If he got the rain under his tail he'd run away.

JOSH. I hear Ab Whittaker sued the *Punkin Center Weekly Bugle* fer libel.

JIM. Do tell. Did he git damages?

JOSH. Everybody seems to think so. The judge made the editor give Ab the paper fer a year.

JIM. I hear ye hed quite a time while you wuz down to New York.

JOSH. Yep. I've made up a song about it. Want to hear it?

JIM. I wouldnt mind. Mebbe I can stand it.

JOSH. I hedn't bin down thar more than two weeks
'til I found out I wuz nothin' but a rube frum a high
grass town.

I have just got back from New York town
Where I never had been before.
Haven't got as much money as I hed when I left,
But I know a whole lot more.
When I left home I thought that I
Was a man of some renoun
But in old New York I was nothing more
Just a rube from a high grass town.

And, oh, my, what they did to me
Lingers in my memory.
From early morning 'til the sun went down
I got buncoed all around.
Cut more capers than a circus clown,
Darned old rube from a high grass town.

I had writ some letters on the train
That I wanted to mail back home
And tell them about the things I'd seen,
And just how far I'd come.
I seen a box all painted red
And I dropped my letters in.
Fire engines come from all around
And the bells commenced to ring.

And gee whiz, what they did to me:
Squirted water all over me.
I grabbed a feller and I said to him,
Pull me out, for I can't swim.
Crowd all shouted, "Let him drown,
Darned old Rube from a high grass town."

A BUSY WEEK AT PUNKIN CENTER

WALL, I think last week wuz the busiest week we ever hed in Punkin Center. It started right in on Sunday, too. You see Lige Willitt hed lost a cow critter. She wuz either strayed or stolen and Lige Willitt wuz not certain which and he met the Parson and he sed, "Parson, I've lost my cow critter and this bein' the Lord's day I thought I'd ast you to announce from the pulpit that I've lost a cow critter and if any of the neighbors has got one that don't belong to them they'll know as how she's mine." Wall, the Parson preached his sermon. Among other things he hed to announce wuz the marriage of Sister Symanthy Sprossby to Brother Martin Whittleby of New Whipstitch and he sed, "Sister Sprossby's about to be married and we'll be sorry to lose her. She's bin an idefatable worker in the church and her loss will be felt very keenly." And Lige, he wuz sottin' back in the church and he heard the word "lose" and he thought the Parson wuz talkin' about his cow, and he sed, "Parson, you might tell 'em all so that they'll know her when they see her. She's got one ear off, she's branded with a WW on the left shoulder and she's got a poke on to keep her from jumpin' fences."

Wall, the next day we hed the worst rain storm I calculate we ever hed. It rained so darned hard the water got all over the pasture and the cows waded around in it and we hed to milk them from a boat and after we hed them milked we hed to strain the milk three or four times to git the minnies out of it.

Wall, next day we hed a meetin' of the Temperance

Society and they made Ezra Hoskins president of it, and jest as Aunt Nancy Smith wuz pinnin' the blue ribbon on Ezry, Si Pettingill stuck his head in the door and he sed, "Ezry, thar's a box of books fer you down to the depot and the agent wants you to cum down and git them; they're leakin'."

Then we heard that Jabe Fischer wuz nigh unto death and it happened in a funny way. You see last spring a feller cum along and sold Ezra Hoskins a box of boots and them boots warn't nothin' but a durned swindle. The uppers war made out of paper and the soles wuz pegged on with oats and he sold a pair of them to Jabe and Jabe wore 'em out in the rain and got them wet and they sprouted and he couldn't git 'em off and he hed to go out in the barn yard and let the calf eat 'em off.

Wall, the calf bit him on his corn and blood poisonin' sot in and he came nigh losin' his leg. Wall, we heerd that that feller what sold the boots wuz goin' to be round next day and we all got down to the store and sot a trap fer him and when he got thar we war all settin' round the corner. Each one of us hed a little sasser full of sugar upon the counter and five cents in front of it, and the feller sed, "What are ye doin'?" and we sed, "We're playin' a little game called sugar and fly." He sed, "How do you play it?" and Ezra Hoskins sez, "Wall, each one of us has a sasser full of sugar and five cents in front of it and the fust one that has a fly light in his sasser gits the money." And he sez, "Kin I play it too?" Ezra sez, "Yep, Si, give him a sasser full." Si give him a sasser full and he lost twenty-five dollars. Then he stuck his finger in it and tasted it and it wuz salt. Deacon Wither- spoon sez, "I calculates this has been the busiest week we ever hed in Punkin Center."

UNCLE JOSH'S RHEUMATISM

WALL, sir, I've hed a little touch of rheumatiz fer quite a spell back, tried purty nigh everything fer it, carried a tater in my pocket, an' a buckeye in my pocket, I hed an eel skin tied around my leg, rubbed my jints with mustard oil, but warn't none of 'em done any good. Nancy sed, I'd just have to go an' see a doctor, cuz my left leg got thet bad, when I walk on it, it'd flop 'round an' kick folks.

Wall, I went to see a doctor, he wuz a homeopath, he sez I hed exclamatory rheumatism, caused by nitric acid in my blood. Wall, I took about a ton of salts, an' a ton of salapathica. He rubbed me with hoss liniment an' mange cure, an' I got woss an' woss; then I went to see another doctor; he wuz an alleypath. He sed I didn't hev rheumatism a-tall, my skyatic nerve wuz out of kilter an' he'd hev to treat my skyattic nerve, an' so he got out a little pigeonhole full of medicene, an' when I warn't lookin' he jabbed thet into my leg clar up to the handle.

All the folks cum a runnin' to see who wuz gittin' killed. Jim Lawson sed he could hear me holler clar over to his house. Wall, fer about two weeks after that I didn't walk a-tall, then they wuz a new religion cum to Punkin Center, they called it Christian Scientific. One of 'em sed he could cure me if I'd read a book what he sold me fer five dollars an', jest imagine, I didn't hev any rheumatism. Wall, I read thet book an' kept sayin' to myself, you darned fool ya haven't got any rheumatism, you jist imagine you got rheu-

matism an' about that time I'd get a pain in my leg thet'd make me jump pretty nigh over the county.

Wall, Ab Whittiker what lived over at Hickory Corners wuz down with a fever an' they wuz givin' him absent treatment, sed he didn't hev any fever; sed he jist imagined he hed a fever. Wall, I met Ab's boy one day an' I ast him how his father wuz, an' he sed his father imagined he wuz dead. They hed a funeral an' buried him.

Wall, I quit readin' thet book, an' went back to mustard oil, an' jist then a feller cum along to Punkin Center, an' hung out his shingle. Sed he wuz an Osteopath doctor, an' nothin' would do Nancy but I must go an' see him. He sed I didn't hev any rheumatism, I hed muscular extraction, an' he'd have to massage me, an' deflect my muscles. Wall, he laid me out on the table, an' went to work on me with a rollin' pin what hed knots in it. He tied my arms in a kink back of my neck, an' purty nigh pulled my neck clar out of the socket. Then that dern fool stood me up under a spout an' turned ice water on me. Wall, I got out of thar somehow, I don't know jist how, but I got out. He cured me of goin' to see doctors; thar's homeapaths an' alleypaths, an' osteopaths, but all paths lead to the grave.

REVIVAL MEETING AT PUNKIN CENTER

WALL, 'long last winter we hed a revival meetin' at Punkin Center, an' purty nigh the whole town got religion. Some of 'em have got it yet. An' some of 'em have shed it jest like a cat sheddin' its hair. Wall, I guess we needed it. Things got so bad in our church we hed to have a one-armed brother take up the collection. Wall, at the revival some nights we hed as high as two hundred cum forward to the mourners' bench. An' frum the testimoney they give it seemed that more than half of the people of Punkin Center ought to be in jail.

One night the choir hed jest got through singin' "What Will the Harvest Be?" an' they woke up old Jim Lawson an' he fergot whar he war an' he stood up and sed he thought the harvest wuz all right, his rye went forty gallons to the acre, an' he would have said more only Deacon Witherspoon headed him off. Gosh, I never wanted to laugh so much in all my born days. We all expected to see Jim git religion, 'cause a couple of weeks before that he got a mighty bad skeer. He wuz cumin' home from the drug store carryin' a load of liquor an' he run his old peg leg through a knothole in the sidewalk an' he stood thar an' walked around that wooden leg fer about two hours. Then it took three of us to pull him out of that knothole. Deacon Witherspoon reminded him of it an' ast him if he wern't goin' to mend his ways, an' Jim sed they warn't only one knothole in that sidewalk an' he knowed whar that wuz now. Before the revival

REVIVAL MEETING AT PUNKIN CENTER 95

meetin' we used to have four saloons an' one drug store now we got five drug stores.

Wall, we hed some mighty interestin' things happen at our revival. We hed a choir consistin' of Hank Slocum, first base; Ab Sprossby, second base; an' Lige Willit, pitcher, an' pitched the tune so high no one but him could sing 'em. An' he couldent carry a tune in a valise. So Samanthy Hoskins done most of the singin'. But I don't think Samanthy's voice converted anybody. But Samanthy jest hed to sing. Gosh, you couldent stop her with a red lantern.

Wall, one night Deacon Witherspoon wuz exaltin' an' he went to sey "This world is but a fleetin' show," and he sed, "This world is but a sheeting flow. I should have sed, This world is but a floating sheet. What I intended to sey is, This world is but a shoating fleet." Wall, the choir hed to sing twice before they got order. An' I jest hed to snicker right out. And Nancy sed I was a burnin' shame an' a disgrace to the cummunity. But, gosh, I'm a laughin' 'bout it yit. Wall, Obediah White, the minister frum Hickory Corners, wuz to preach to us that night. An' I don't think I ever will fergit that serman. He sed, "Year verily, brothers an' sisters, hell is full of beautiful women, automobiles, fast hosses, an' champaign," an' jest then Jim Lawson stood up an' sed, "Oh death whar is they sting?"

Gosh, that busted up the revival meetin'.

UNCLE JOSH'S SECOND TRIP TO THE METROPOLIS

WALL, sir, I've bin down to New Yourk agin. Yes, sir, the second time. An' do you know that is the dog gondest village I ever wuz in. Gosh, they don't know when to go to bed down thar. Thar's more folks on the street at two o'clock in the mornin' than thar is in Punkin Center on circus day.

Wall, sir, they got me in the habit of it too. Yes, sir, I wuz gettin' to be a regular sport. Thar wuz one night I didn't go to bed 'til half-past seven. Wall, while I wuz down thar I wanted to see everything I could see wuth lookin' at. Among other things I wanted to see that Brooklyn bridge. I'm highway commissioner in Punkin Center and we're goin' to build a bridge over our creek this spring and I wanted to git some idees how to build it.

That wuz the buggest contraption I calclate I ever laid my two eyes on. Wall, I wanted to see how they hed it built out on the land, and I walked along lookin' up at it. Gosh, I guess I must a walked a mile an' a half lookin' right up at that bridge. Finally I asked a feller what they put so much of it out on land fer and he sed, "You durned fool, your lookin' at the elevated railroad."

Wall, it wuz comin' along towards night and I wuz gittin' a little tired walking around so much, an' I went up to one of the taverns an' told them I'd like to put up over night. They handed me out a book an' a pen an' ink an' told me to register, an' I told 'em that I didn't want to vote, I jest wanted to stay in the tavern till

mornin' was all. Wall, they took me up-stairs an' gave me three rooms all to myself. Sweats, I think they called it. Fust room was a settin' room. It wuz chuck full of rockin' chairs an' sufas an' cushions; an' they hed a little bedroom with the purtiest bed in it I ever looked at. It wuz so gosh durned purty, it would be a shame to muss it up an' sleep in it. An' I slept on the sufa. Then they hed another little room with a place in it to go swimmin'. It was all polished up shiny marble an' brass an' hed about a wagon load of towels in it, rough ones an' smooth ones, an' all kinds of brushes an' perfumery soap an' hot water an' cold water, an' a sprinklin' apparatus. An', gosh, I jest stood thar an' looked at it an' wished it wuz Saturday night.

UNCLE JOSH AND THE BILLIKIN

WALL, gosh all hemlock, I don't s'pose I ever will have a real good hoss sense. I wuz down to the county seat and a feller sold me a Billikin. He sed it wuz the God of things as they ought to be. An' as long as I hed it I'd allways have good luck. Wall, I brought it hum and showed it to Nancy. An' Nancy sed she wouldnt let the ugly little critter cum into the house. And that I wuz gettin' to be a regular heathen idoliker.

Wall, it wuzent very handsum, that's a fact, but it kinda made you laugh to look at it. Wall, I sot it on the family Bible and Nancy calclated it couldnt do any harm thar. Wall, next day I wanted to see how it'd work, so I followed directions and tickled its toes with a straw and jest then Rube Hendricks cum in an' sed, "Uncle Josh, the mill damn has busted and the water is all over your hog lot." Wall, I went down thar and I hed sixty hogs. And they were all drownded 'cept two and I managed to get them out. They wuz purty good swimmers. Jest then the constable cum along an' suphoenied me to serve on the jury at a time that I wuz so busy gettin' my crops in I didn't know what to do.

I wuz gettin' riled when Jim Lawson cum along an' he sed, "Uncle Josh, the hired hand's let your hosses run away an' smashed the wagon all to pieces an' broke his leg an' thar bringin' him hum. Whar you goin' to put him?" Wall, we put him in the spar room an' called the doctor an' I went after the hosses, an' jest as I wuz gettin' back hum the gosh durned barn wuz on fire. Wall, we got out everything we could an'

managed to save the foundation an' jest then Ezra Hoskins our pustmaster handed me two letters. One of them wuz frum Nancy's brother out in Nebraski. It sed he hed bin sick. His wife hed died. His crops hed failed an' him an' his nine children wuz comin' hum to live with us until he could git started agin.

An' the other letter wuz frum the Pension Department at Washington, an' they sed they couldent give me any pension because they couldent find my war record. Wall, I wuz so gosh dern mad I went into the house an' grabbed that Billikin an' throwed it down the well an' by gosh, the next day the well went dry, an' we've bin hawlin' water frum the crick ever since. Gosh darn that Billikin, anyhow.

UNCLE JOSH AT THE DENTIST

SCENE.—*Dentist's office. DENTIST arranging and polishing instruments. Knock is heard on the door.*

DENTIST. Come in. (*Door opens and JOSH comes in. Carpet bag in one hand and umbrella in the other.*) Good-morning!

JOSH. Howdy! Be you the tooth carpenter?

DENTIST. No, I'm the dentist and I can see that you are in need of a dentist's services.

JOSH. No, I don't want that. (*Puts things in corner and takes off hat.*) Jest want to git a tooth pulled out.

DENTIST. Oh, I see. Well, be seated and let me have a look at that tooth.

JOSH (*seats himself in DENTIST's chair*). It's a whopper, Doc.

DENTIST. Hold your mouth open a little wider—a little wider, please.

JOSH. Gosh, Doc, if I open it any wider I am afeerd you will fall in, tools and all.

DENTIST (*looks in JOSH's mouth*). Why, you have quite a cavity in the left lower molar!

JOSH (*sits up, and knocks instruments off stand*). Wall, I knowed one of 'em wuz holler but didn't know I hed a cavity.

DENTIST. Now, sit perfectly still while I prepare this tooth for fillng. (*Buzz—buzz—buzz.*) Hold on. I think the drill has struck some foreign substance.

JOSH (*writhes with pain*). Gosh, Doc, I think you

struck a nail in my boot heel that time. You know, Doc, that's my tooth your diggin' in. You ain't borin' fer oil.

DENTIST (*stops drilling and wipes off instruments*). I am trying to save your tooth. There are only thirty-two teeth in the human head and we need them all.

JOSH. How many you got, Doc?

DENTIST. I have twenty-eight.

JOSH (*takes tumbler of water and drinks*). Gosh, your purty nigh human, ain't you?

DENTIST. Now then we will try it again. (*Buzz—buzz—buzz.*) I am afraid I will have to give you gas.

JOSH. Wall, I don't know much 'bout gas, Doc, we don't have it down our way. If it's all the same to you, you can give me kerosene.

DENTIST. Oh, this is laughing gas.

JOSH. Wall, this tooth fixin' ain't no laffin' matter. Mebbe it makes you laff, but it ain't a durn bit funny to me.

DENTIST. Well, we will try it once more. (*Adjusts napkin under JOSH's chin. Picks up another instrument.*) All ready now, this won't hurt much.

(*Buzz—buzz—buzz.*)

JOSH. Oh—oh! Hold on, Doc, I want to pray.

DENTIST. Why, my dear sir, you are not going to die.

JOSH. Wall, I feel a powerful lot like it. Oh—oh! I do wish Nancy wuz here.

DENTIST. Now, once again. (*Buzz—buzz—buzz.*)

JOSH. Gosh all hemlock. (*Spits.*) Oh—oh—gosh!

DENTIST. That was nothing; only a small nerve.

JOSH. I wish I hed your nerve.

DENTIST. Now for the last time.

(*Buzz—buzz—buzz.*)

JOSH (*grabs DENTIST's hand*). Hold on, Doc, I think you bored a hole clar into my conscience that time.

DENTIST. Well, you will have to lose this tooth and I will have to give you gas. (*Gets things from places in laboratory for administering gas.*) There now. . . . Draw a long deep breath . . . breathe natural.

JOSH. Ah—ah—ah——

DENTIST. There now he's gone! Now for that tooth. (*Gets forceps and pulls.*) Ah, there it is. Ha! ha! ha!

JOSH (*regains himself and sits up*). Doc, I guess you got some of that laffin' gas too. But I've got a mighty good joke on you.

DENTIST. Why! What is it?

JOSH. You pulled the wrong tooth.

UNCLE JOSH IN AN AUTOMOBILE

JOSH. Say, Henry, who's that feller with the coal bucket and blinders on?

HENRY. That's the chauffer, Uncle.

JOSH. Wall, Henry, you tell Mr. Chauffer to run a little bit slow, I ain't used to ridin' in them air benzine buggies.

HENRY. Oh, that's all right, Uncle; get right in.

JOSH. Wall, now you jest tell him I ain't in no hurry. I want to git thar to-day. I don't want to ketch up to yesterday.

HENRY (*business*). Wall, here we go, Uncle.

JOSH. Say, it starts off kinder easy, don't it? Gosh, this beats ridin' in the steam keers. Look out, that's a waggin in the road, Henry.

HENRY. Oh, let them see us. We don't have to see them.

JOSH. Wall, mebbly they won't see us. Look out—gosh, we cum mighty nigh. Say, Henry, I think we run over a man back thar.

HENRY. Wall, there's a courthouse up here a ways, we'll stop and pay a fine.

JOSH. Wall, I ain't so anxious to git in the courthouse, and I hain't so anxious to pay a fine neither. Gosh, but we be goin'! What town wuz that we went through, Henry?

HENRY. That wuz New Haven, Uncle.

JOSH. Wall, now I didn't think New Haven wuz such a little bit of a town. Tell the chauffer to go a little slower, I'm losin' my hair. Say, Henry, what creek wuz that we jumped over back thar?

HENRY. That wuz the Hudson River, Uncle.

JOSH. Gosh, what state are we in now, Henry?

HENRY. I think we are in Pennsylvania —

(*Crash.*)

JOSH. Here, take this durned old kerosene wagon off me, I ought to knowed better than to ride in the fust place. Say, Henry, is that my eye on the dashboard?

HENRY. No, Uncle; that's one of my ears.

JOSH. Say, Henry, what becum of that chowfer feller?

HENRY. That's him up in that tree. (*Crash.*)

JOSH. What wuz that, Henry?

HENRY. That wuz our shadow just caught up with us.

JOSH. I didn't know a shadow could go so fast.

CONSTABLE. Here, now you're arrested fer out runnin' the speed limit. You cum right along with me. I'll teach ye to come out here wither your automobeely. Cum along all of ye's.

JOSH. Say, Henry, what we want now is an autogohome.

AND THEN I LAUGHED

I just came in from a country town, a week ago to-day,
To-morrow I'm goin' back again, 'cause I can no
longer stay.

A man gave me a half a dollar, I was green as green
could be,

Says I, gimme another, for my brother, 'cause he's
twice as green as me.

Then I laughed he he he ha ha ha, ha ha ha ha he,
I couldnt keep from laughin', 'cause it really tickled
me.

The folks around commenced to grin, all looked right
at me,

But I couldnt keep from laughin', Oh, he ha ha ha ha
he.

Then I laughed, he he he ha ha ha, ha ha ha ha he,
I couldnt keep from laughin', 'cause it really tickled
me.

The folks around commenced to grin, all looked right
at me,

But I couldnt keep from laughin', Oh, he ha ha ha ha
he.

I went into a minstrel show, the doin's there to see,
I got some peanuts, then sat down, as happy as could
be.

They told some jokes my grandpop told, wasent new
to me,

But I couldnt keep from laughin', 'cause they really
tickled me.

Then I laughed, he he he ha ha ha, ha ha ha ha he,
I couldent keep from laughin', 'cause it really tickled
me.

The folks around commenced to grin, all shook hands
at me,

But I couldent keep from laughin', 'cause, ha ha ha ha
ha he.

Then I laughed, ha ha ha ha ha ha, he he he he he,
I couldent keep from laughin', 'cause it really tickled
me.

The folks around commenced to grin, all shook hands
at me,

But I couldn't keep from laughin', 'cause, he ha ha ha ha
ha he.

I went into an' eatin' house, some doughnuts for to git,
There was a gal behind the counter, all dressed up fine
you bet,

She wouldent take my nickel 'cause it had a hole that
went clar through,

Says I to her that's nothin' new, they was a hole in the
doughnut too.

Then I laughed, he ha ha ha ha ha, ha ha ha ha he,
I couldent keep from laughin', 'cause it really tickled
me.

The girl she got so allfired mad, she could hardly see,
But I couldent keep from laughin', Oh, ha ha ha ha he.

Then I laughed, ha ha ha ha ha he, ha ha ha ha he,
I couldent keep from laughin', 'cause it really tickled
me.

The gal she got so allfired mad, she could hardly see,
But I couldent keep from laughin', Oh, ha ha ha ha he.

UNCLE JOSH AT THE SKATING RINK

WALL, sir, I used to be right smart on skates when I wuz a boy down hum. Yes, sir, I could outskate anything on our mill pond.

Wall, sir, I got down here to New York and I wuz lookin' 'round and I see'd a sine what it sed "Skatin'" and I 'lowed I'd jest go in and have a skate.

Wall, I got on the inside and a feller cum up to me and sed, "Kin you skate?" I told him I calculated as how I could. Wall, he called over a boy and he strapped a pair of toy automobiles on my feet and sed, "Now, don't fergit to skate, boy."

I calculated I'd jest show them city folks a few capers and by gosh, I did. Fust thing I 'lowed I'd would be the two-step and I done it,—jest two steps,—that wuz all.

Wall, that floor wuz slicker than greased lightnin' and them wheels wuz the most uneasy little critters. One foot went northeast and t'other went southwest and I don't know jest whar the rest of me went to.

I done the Philadelphia twist; the figure eight; the spread eagle; the inside roll, and the outside roll,—all at once.

Wall, when I cum to, thar wuz a lot of fellers standin' 'round me and one hed somethin' to smell in a bottle; one hed liniment; 'nother hed ice-water and they got me on my feet and tole me to try it over agin, but my ambition fer skatin' wuz gone and so wuz my watch and chain.

Wall, I got them durn little wheels off of my feet

and I throwed 'em at that boy jest to show him I didn't fergit him, and I got out of thar. Wall, when I got on the outside, the fust thing I seen wuz a feller rollin' all over the sidewalk and I sed to a gentleman standin' thar, "What's the matter of him?" He sed, "Wall, I guess he's got a skate on."

I guess, by gosh, he hed, that's the way it acted on me.

TRAIN TIME AT PUNKIN CENTER

SCENE.—*Typical town railway station with customary small town loafers waiting for the train to come in. They are looking at board where train time is marked.*

VILLAGER. Wall, Josh, I see number six is late as usual.

JOSH. Yep, that train never wuz on time but once and then it wuz ten minutes late. Hank Williams is havin' quite a time gittin' that barrel of salt in his wagon.

VILLAGER. Hank ain't the man he used to be, is he, Josh?

JOSH. No, he never wuz. (*All laugh.*) Lige Willitt cum nigh loosin' his automobile yesterday.

VILLAGER. I want to know. Some one steal it?

JOSH. No, it run down a gopher hole, and he hed to carry water all afternoon to try to drown it out.

(*Train whistles in distance and comes around curve.*)

VILLAGERS (*in chorus*). Hey, Hank, hold your hosses and git 'em off the track.

(*Train stops at station and passengers alight.*)

EZRA HOSKINS. Baggage—Transfer—Hoskins' tavern—Baggage transfer—Commercial House—Hoskins' tavern!

VILLAGER. Thar's a feller in the keer talkin' to ye, Josh.

JOSH. Be ye talkin' to me, mister?

PASSENGER (*leaning out of car window*). I was talking right at you.

JOSH. You're a bad shot; you missed me a mile.

PASSENGER. What's the population of this town?

JOSH. Principally fruit.

PASSENGER. I don't mean what do you raise, but how many people live here?

JOSH. Git out and count 'em; thar all here at train time. (*All laugh.*)

PASSENGER. Have you lived here all your life?

JOSH. No, not yit.

VILLAGER. He'll do well joshin' Josh.

HANK. Yes, he don't know he's talkin' to the old feller what put the josh in joshin'.

PASSENGER. Anything going on here?

JOSH. No, nothin' ever happens here only sun up, sun down and change of moon.

(*Punkin Center Quartette standing on platform begins to sing.*)

Down in the meadow the bob-o'-link was singing,
Singing to his mate (*Bass solo.*) to his mate—ate—
ate.

Down in the meadow the bob-o'-link was singing,
When I first met blue-eyed Kate.
We wandered through the fields together
As we listened to the bob-o'-link, (*Bass solo.*) link—
link.

And we vowed our love would never sever
As we listened ———

HANK. Coo-coo.

JOSH. Now, Hank, you stop that and let the boys sing.

QUARTETTE. As we listened to the bob-o'-link,
(*Bass solo.*) link—link.

PASSENGER. Who is that singing?

JOSH. The Punkin Center Sym-pathy Quartette.

PASSENGER. You mean sym-phony, don't you?

JOSH. No, Sym-pathy. They have the sympathy of the whole village when they sing.

PASSENGER. Local quartette?

JOSH. No, barber shop. What bizzness be ye in?

PASSENGER. Chiropractor. Chi-ro-pract-or.

JOSH. I don't mean your politics. What be ye doin'?

PASSENGER. Chiropractor. Chi-ro-prac-tor.

JOSH (*nodding his head*). Oh, yes.

(*"All aboard!" Bell rings, whistle blows, and train starts. All aboard!"*)

JOSH (*turns to JIM LAWSON*). What did he say he wuz doin', Jim?

JIM. Ki-re-o-prac-tor.

JOSH. Smart feller. I'll bet he sells a lot of it.

GASSED

Settin' 'round the livry stable
Most any summer night,
Hosses to the left of us
And hosses to the right.
Old Hank Weaver readin'
From a paper in his hand
All about the doin's
Over thar in no-man's land.
Then Jim Lawson gits to tellin'
'Bout his valor in the past,
We put the hosses nose bags on
Before they all git gassed.

'Tain't no uncommon thing fer us
About this time of year
To have Chawtalkwa doin's
Or barbecue a steer.
And on such occasions,
While the corn is jest in tassel
We have some high brow nabob
With old Webster take a wrassel.
We listen most respectful
'Til the storm of words is passed,
We have it in the open
So none of us is gassed.

Thar's a heap of talk a floatin'
Round the barber shop each day,
And every feller waitin'
For a chance to have his say.

A drummer from the city
Stands up to air his views
And tell us old by hekers
All the very latest news.
He uses forrin' language
'Til he has us all aghast,
But the barber has the buzz-fan on
So none of us is gassed.

And when we have our county fair
As we do most every year,
The folks just gather thar in swarms,
They cum from far and near.
Then some city politician
As the speaker of the day,
Tells us how to do our farmin'
In a more intensive way.
He speaks of agriculture
Of to-day and in the past,
A thunder storm it shuts him off,
So none of us is gassed.

DORIS COMES TO TOWN

By EUGENE HAFER

A Comedy in Three Acts.

Four males, four females. Scenery, a single easy interior. Plays a full evening. Royalty, \$10.00 for the first and \$5.00 for each subsequent performance. A clean, wholesome, farcical comedy which is based on an absurdly boastful untruth, the author of which meets with a humiliating exposure. A lover in a great cheese factory in town boasts to his best girl in the country that he is the president of the concern, while in reality he is a very unimportant cog in the office wheels. The way in which he is exposed is "a scream." His girl comes to town on business with a lawyer who is the son of the real president. The lover has a brief, inglorious, wholesome, and very laughable setback, loses his girl to the young lawyer, and his job into the bargain. He is saved by a stroke of luck, which though undeserved is often the reward of reckless good nature. It is a merry little play with several good parts giving an equal opportunity to all members of the cast.

Price, 35 cents.

A TIP BY RADIO

By CARL WEBSTER PIERCE

A Play in Three Acts. Four males, five

females. Scene, any simple interior. Playing time, about two hours. An exciting, clean, old-fashioned melodrama in which the good are rewarded and the wicked punished. A mortgage must be paid off by the widow who has no money. A real estate shark has bought up the mortgage and plans to ruin the widow of his old enemy and make a fortune by selling out to the railroad. A timely legacy enables the widow to meet her indebtedness. The villain then plans a double revenge by giving the widow the impression that he wishes to make amends by letting her in on a profitable stock deal. The stock is deemed worthless, but by the aid of a fake connection to the radio which an accomplice has attached in the cellar to the machine of the widow's son, the villain gets a fake message showing its great value. The clever son binds and gags the accomplice in the cellar, rectifies the radio, fools and captures the crook, and bags the stock which turns out to be really valuable after all.

Price, 35 cents.

VAUDEVILLE DOUBLES

By H. I. LARITY

A collection of four complete talking acts for either the vaudeville stage, lodge room, club, or minstrel show. No special scenery required as all can be played in a street drop. The material is original and has never before appeared in print. All four sketches were written for professional use and have been played by vaudeville artists of note. They are ideally suited for amateurs, and while we do not recommend them for churches, they contain nothing to offend even a critical audience. Contents: "What Street," two males, a negro talking act containing choice splashes of humor; "Krazy Kat," two males, a rapid-fire sidewalk conversation where every line brings a laugh; "Patter," two males, twelve minutes of lightning repartee; "Holy Smoke," two males, a black and white novelty that will rock the house with laughter. Singing and specialties can be introduced into each of the sketches.

Price, 35 cents.

THE GOLDEN ARROW

By JAMES P. WEBBER

A Romantic Fantasy in One Act.

Scene, a monastery garden. Characters: Abelard, Heloise, Brother Ambrose. By means of a gilded discarded weather-vane, the sweetheart of a young postulant gains admittance to a monastery and there in the guise of Cupid masquing as a little brother of poverty wins her lover. The song as used by Heloise is printed with the text of the play. Its charm is comparable with "The Maker of Dreams," "Prunella," and "Chinese Lanterns." The attractiveness of its format makes it an ideal gift-book.

Price, 35 cents.

GOLLIWOG IN FAIRYLAND

By MAUD COCKRELL

The sub-title of this play, "How Edward the Teddy Bear Became a Knight" promises an interesting plot and the promise is quite realized. Teddy arrives just in time to save his friend Golliwog from execution and to be the means of exposing the treacherous scheme of Fairy Daffodil, and so the denouement is a real exciting one. Betty and her nurse open the play with a short prologue. The other characters are, besides Golliwog and Teddy Bear, Fairy Snowdrop, Fairy Daffodil, The Fairy Queen, the Witch, two Goblins, a Special Constable, and the Herald. Chickweed and Fairy Rosebud, are dancers who only speak one or two words, while there are two policemen, two soldiers, fairies and elves who take part in the action but do not speak. The play can be recommended as almost as ideal one for performance in schools. Printed in an attractive edition and quite suited for gift books.

Price, 50 cents. Royalty \$8.00. Imported.

ROSEMARY'S GARDEN

By EDITH M. JEWSON

This is a charming "fairy mystery play" intended to be played by children for grown-up people, but that does not mean that an audience composed of children would not appreciate it hugely. There are twelve characters, of both sexes, but more may be used as desired. When the play begins, the three brothers, Jack, Tom and Billy, have become or are turning into bears under the evil influence of the unseen Blunderbuss whose servant Black Bolo is. Rosemary assumes the duties of mother to the three boys and saves them from the clutches of the evil Blunderbuss at great risk to her own life, so that they all become boys again. The fairy Rosy Violet takes a prominent share in the action and her impetus, engaging warmheartedness forms a delightful feature of the play. Printed in an attractive edition and quite suited for gift books.

Price, 50 cents. Royalty, \$5.00. Imported.

DRAMATIZED MISSIONARY STORIES

A book of short missionary plays adapted for use in Young People's Societies of all kinds. The book contains dramatizations of incidents in the lives of well known missionaries in representative scenes in home and foreign fields and calls to service. Full directions for the costuming and scenery of the plays given with the text.

Price Cloth \$1.10.

WHY THE FUCHSIA HANGS ITS HEAD

BY MAUD COCKRELL

The list of

characters is fairly long. There are three fairies with speaking parts and Puck and the Fairy Queen. There are the Prime Minister, the Judge, the Court Usher, and the Court Jester of Fairyland. Betty and the Dream Fairy appear in a short prologue, and there are fairies and elves and a butterfly who do not speak but who take part in the action of the play. The story in brief is that of a fairy ball to be held on Midsummer Night and every fairy who goes is ordered to bring a gift to the Fairy Queen, failing which she will be severely punished. Fairy Primrose, being very poor, can only bring some flowers. But even they are destroyed by Fairy Fuchsia out of spite. Fairy Primrose is about to be sentenced when Puck appears and relates the story of what really happened. Thereupon the Fuchsia is condemned to hang her head forever after. Printed in an attractive edition and quite suited for a gift book.

Price, 50 cents per copy. Royalty, \$8.00. Imported.

MARTHA'S MOURNING

BY PHOEBE HOFFMAN

Three female characters. Plays about thirty minutes. The story deals with the death-bed repentance of a disagreeable, miserably old woman who has made a hard job of living and who is determined to make the job of dying equally hard. Martha, her niece, whom she has always despised for her meekness, endeavors to bring about a change of heart and peace of mind, all to no avail, until, feigning sleep when an inquisitive neighbor calls, Auntie is surprised at the spunk Martha exhibits in her defence. The minute the door is closed on the neighbor by the indignant Martha, Auntie proceeds to make the most of her limited time and Martha's mourning is planned and her future is assured with a swiftness that has delighted many audiences. This play has won wide popularity in production by Woman's Clubs and should be played, particularly at the point of Auntie's conversion, in a spirit of high good humor.

Price 35 cents. Royalty \$5.00.

MARRIAGES ARE MADE IN HEAVEN AND ELSE- WHERE.

BY GRAHAM PRICE

Excellent Irish Comedy in One Act. Two males, two females. Scene, an interior. Playing time, about thirty minutes. The four amusing characters depict the essence of Irish wit and humor. Only after kissing the Blarney Stone could Nora O'Grady, a young woman in search of a husband, make the match she did and force the reluctant Reilly brothers, Pat and Mike, to such reckless rivalry. The humor of the text has seldom been approached.

Price, 50 cents. Royalty, \$8.00.

THE WOMEN'S VILLAGE IMPROVEMENT CLUB

BY C. A. WOOD

A comedy in one act for nine women and one small boy. More characters can be added as desired. A simple interior scene is called for and the playing time is about forty minutes. The plot is a clever satire on that popular institution "Women's Clubs." A sure success wherever used.

Price, 30 cents.

GETTING ACQUAINTED WITH MADGE

By J. C. McMULLEN

A Farce in

Three Acts. Seven males, five females. Two easy interiors. Playing time approximately two hours. Costumes modern. Two pretty girls, a lost letter, four good-looking students, a violent storm, an accidental meeting, and there you have the makings of a comic situation of increasing rapidity and fun. The girl who lost the letter was named Jerry. The boys who find it decide that Jerry loves Madge and decide to cut him out. They therefore hatch an outrageous plot to scrape acquaintance with Madge. The plot succeeds admirably. They meet Madge; they also meet Jerry. They also become entangled in some very laughable and humiliating disasters from which they extricate themselves and are forgiven, and the curtain is rung down on a happy ending with much laughter. It is a sprightly farce in which there is an abundance of fun without any taint of impropriety or any element of offense. The characters are clearly differentiated, the dialogue is lively and the situations keep the audience continually amused. This is a new and original play by the author of those ever popular plays "Wives to Burn," "When a Feller Needs a Friend," "Making Daddy Behave," "The Boob," etc.

Price, 35 cents.

MALTED MILK AND MARCIA

By CARL WEBSTER PIERCE

A Comedy in One Act.

3 Males, 2 females. Plays forty-five minutes. Scene, the office of the Flint-Locke Company. Good character parts and a chance for effective acting. Old Flint is as hard as his name indicates, and his one extravagance is a liking for Malted Milk. Marcia answers an advertisement, "Stenographer wanted. No Flappers Need Apply," gets the job thru a clever bit of impersonation and lands a big order for the house, incidentally teaching Flint a much needed lesson. The foundation of the plot is laughter, business office routine, a bit of satire, a touch of sentiment, all of which combined make a corking good play suitable for all times and purposes.

Price, 25 cents.

MRS. PAT AND THE LAW

By MARY ALDIS

A Comedy of Temperament.

Three males, two females. The heroine is a beaten-up washlady, and the hero, her lovable bibulous husband. There is a crippled boy who loves his father's stories of beautiful princesses and kings and castles, and a visiting nurse who is not bewitched by Pat and thinks he needs a lesson. The nurse persuades Mrs. Pat to invoke the arm of the law, but when the Law appears in the person of a burly policeman, Pat pursues his usual wheedling tactics, until Mrs. Pat grabs the warrant, drives the Law forth with fury, and turns her wrath on the visiting nurse, who flees, leaving the Pat family to work out its own salvation. The Eighteenth Amendment does not seem to have dimmed the popularity of this charming and whimsical play, which never fails to delight its audience. Royalty, \$5.00 for each amateur performance.

Price, 35 cents.

RUMMAGE DONATIONS BY ORISSA W. GLEASON

An entertainment in one scene.

3 males, 6 females. Playing time about one hour. Can be played on any stage or platform, or even in a room. In this amusing burlesque our human peculiarities and methods of accomplishing charitable deeds are made the butt of an amusing satire. In a ludicrous manner the plot unfolds the inside workings of getting ready for the rummage sale. The family motto might well be "In Agin, Out Agin, Finnigin." Just the thing for Churches, Women's Clubs and Lodges.

Price, 25 cents.

BARBARA MAKES A SPLASH BY EUGENE HAFFER

A Comedy-Drama in Three

Acts. Five males, four females. Two easy interior sets. A play of unusual possibilities in the hands of good actors, and with a fine star part for the right Barbara. The heroine has vowed vengeance on the man who has caused the death of her father and mother by robbing them of their life's savings ten years ago. She has become the trusted secretary of the president of an automobile company and she is devoted to him. She is also in love with a man whom she supposes to be the son of the president. The company is on the verge of bankruptcy and is about to be saved by a timely loan. At this juncture, Barbara discovers that the president is the man who robbed her father. She fulfills her revengeful vow by halting the loan. It is an exciting moment and looks like a bad mess, when the president confesses not only that he robbed Barbara's father but also that his son is an adopted boy to whom he has given his own name. Barbara relents and takes back her lover. There are first-class comic parts in each scene to relieve the tension, and the hero has a particularly striking place. It is a stirring drama which grips the heart and moves with rapidity. Released to amateurs for a royalty of \$10.00 for the first and \$5.00 for each subsequent performance.

Price, 35 cents.

SQUARING IT WITH THE BOSS BY J. C. McMULLEN

A Comedy in One Act.

Three males, three females. Scenery, a living-room. Playing time, about forty minutes. A roaring farce with all star parts. A young and up-to-date couple have just returned to their apartment after a holiday when they have telegrams that two maiden aunts, who hate each other, are coming to visit them. To crown the muddle, the hero's boss telephones to say that he will drop in to dinner to see the baby. Now there is no food in the house and there is no baby. There should be a baby because it has been used as a reason for a recent increase in salary to the hero by the employer. The baby is improvised by an ingenious scheme, the aunts arrive, and the fun waxes fast and furious. The day is saved by the boss, who turns out to be a much-admired and desired friend of both aunts. The audience will be hanging between excitement, tears and laughter until the drop of the curtain.

Price, 25 cents.

THE FEVER WARD

BY FRANZ RICKABY

A Comedy in One Act. Four males, two females. Scenery, a single interior. Three business men take a rest cure in a sanatorium. Given a flirtations doctor and a pretty nurse, and what more is needed for a very farcical, four-cornered comedy? The patients and the doctor have each proposed to the nurse. She has accepted each one in turn without allowing their admiration in any way to interfere with her duties. Each man is kept guessing. The nurse has found by experience that to refuse an offer of marriage makes a sick person sicker and upsets the doctor. She has the welfare of the hospital at heart, so she keeps them all cheerful. But she really does fall in love with one of the men, and her method of discovering which one of them is serious, lands the whole group into a furious tangle, which is the true spirit of comedy. There is an attractive French ward maid, and she knows a thing or two. Very funny, and a delightfully wholesome play in which each player has a wide scope for real talent and to which there is a happy ending.

Price, 25 cents.

WAITING AT THE CHURCH

BY FRANZ RICKABY

A Comedy in One Act. Five males, three females. One easy interior set. A runaway accident combined with a runaway match, mixed in with a wedding rehearsal by another couple, the transference of the runaway bride to the best man at the rehearsal of the wedding, a mock wedding to fool the irate and pursuing father, the dismissal of the undesirable bridegroom, and a happy ending for both would-be brides; here you have the basis for comic and exciting situations entangled preposterously and delightfully by the mistakes and thick-headedness of an old janitor. It is a good farce, easily staged, with laughter and love from beginning to end. There are fine opportunities for clever acting at every turn of the tangle.

Price, 25 cents.

THE MAKER OF DREAMS

BY OLIPHANT DOWN

A Fantasy in One Act. Scene, quaint room in an old cottage. Two males, one female. Costumes, not difficult. Pierrot and Pierrette are business partners only, not man and wife. She loves him ardently, but he is ignorant of this, takes her for granted, and is always looking for his "ideal" elsewhere. On this occasion, the Maker of Dreams (Love) visits their cottage, talks to each separately, shows Pierrette that he understands her longing, and tells Pierrot by what signs he shall recognize his ideal lady. He leaves. As Pierrot scans Pierrette carefully, in order to describe her for the local paper, he gradually recognizes her traits as identical with those which the visitor has given to the ideal woman intended for him by the Maker of Dreams. Charming Pierrot fantasy, good dialogue, and underneath, essential humanity. Always effective, if well played — and not difficult. Royalty, \$8.00 for each amateur performance.

Price, 50 cents.